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ABSTRACT

A conference was convened as a forum for second language educators to exchange ideas on the second language needs of international business. This report includes a transcription of the discussions that took place as well as several brief papers describing locally used methods of language assessment and an innovative program. A consensus of the conference consists in the recognition that business and industry have great need of second language skilled professionals, a need that has not been met in part because the education of a technologist, businessman, or engineer has never included foreign language study as an integral element. The traditional method of "tacking on" a few hours of language instruction to meet an immediate need is recognized as inadequate. Among the alternatives proposed are: promoting as a norm lengthy (and costly) language training for employees selected on the basis of professional expertise and demostrated language aptitude; and encouraging business to offer incentives for students to maintain language study throughout their schooling. (JB)

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THE BRITISH OVERSEAS TRADE BOARD'S REPORT "FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR OVERSEAS TRADE" AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

A verbatim report of a Conference for Headteachers held on March 22, 1980 at the University of Aston in Birmingham.

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Mr. A. F. Frodsham, C.B.E, C Eng, FIMechE, FIMC, FBIM.

Introduced by:

Sir Adrian Cadbury, M.A. Hon. D.Sc.

FL 012 145

Department of Modern Languages
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July 1980

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CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Sir Adrian Cadbury

First of all, welcome to you all. We are delighted to have such a good attendance and, if I may, I would like right from the outset to thank all those who have put a great deal of hard work into the preparation for this conference. It does seem appropriate that a technological university, which also teaches modern languages, should act as host for a conference on foreign languages for overseas trade and its implications for schools. I am very grateful to Anthony Frodsham for accepting the invitation to chair the conference. As the Director General of the Engineering Employers' Federation he is better placed than anyone to know what industry's needs are in this field, and in addition as a member of the British Overseas Trade Board's Language Study Group, he has studied the subject in depth and wishes to see the Report's recommendations turned into action.

Obviously, as an industrialist I am concerned that industry is proving so slow to recognise the overwhelming advantages of an adequate knowledge of at least one foreign language. It comes, I suppose, from a combination of a pattern of trade geared to the Commonwealth and United States and, the success of other nationals in learning English, but in the tough competitive world of today we cannot afford the additional disadvantage of having to rely on English loud and clear.

An official government report 'Education for Salesmanship" said:

> "In almost all markets it is a damaging and often a fatal handicap if representatives, whether principals or subordinates, cannot converse freely with a customer in his own language, as well as read his newspapers and trade journals; and perhaps an equal handicap if correspondence from headquarters is not conducted in that language. Our export trade, however, is often so handicapped and today it cannot afford to accept even small handicaps which can be avoided. This one is far from being small and can, we are convinced, be avoided".

Now the sad thing is that report was written fifty years ago. I think that perhaps one factor in our failure to learn languages is a lack of confidence in our ability either to learn them or at any rate to be able to make practical use of them when we have learnt them. That is why it does seem to me a question of our working together to put this right, because we can only overcome that disadvantage at school. I have certainly found a knowledge of languages very useful in my business. Quite apart from the closer personal relationships which you can build up as a result, you can absorb so much more of a foreign market if you can read the local paper, if you can understand the advertisements, if you can do your own shopping. I think that what is essential is to be able to understand the structure of a language. Your knowledge of vocabulary can be fairly limited if you are dealing with people in the same line of business, but you do need the framework into which to fit the appropriate words. I have found at international conferences that even with professional translators, their knowledge of the subject under discussion is more important than their linguistic ability.

As businessmen we need to note how rapidly the pecking order in languages is changing. A recent study in Le Monde showed that of the 270 million people round the world classed as Francophone, only 90 m. actually speak French, compared with English (350 m.), Spanish (200 m.), Arabic (120 m.) and Portuguese (115 m.).

My final comment concerns my first visit to a country - Japan, where I found myself unable to understand anything I saw or heard. It brought home to me how cut off you are in this position, how difficult it is to assess the people you meet and how difficult it is to get the feel of a market.

I gave an interview to the Japanese equivalent of the Financial Times and when it appeared in the paper I couldn't recognise anything at all except a picture of myself and even that was sideways. But I had it translated out of interest. One question which had been put to me since the Japanese take their ancestors very seriously was "What difference does it make to you to be the fourth generation of your family working in the same business?" Well I had not been expecting that question, so very foolishly my immediate reply was: "We have a saying in Britain - clogs to clogs in three generations". This understandably provoked excited questions about the precise nature of clogs and so I tried to explain the meaning of the proverb. Just for interest, this is how it came out in the translation:

> "When he was asked if he would be the fourth executive in the line of succession from the same family, he said with a good sense of humour if the founder is great, the second generation will spend all the money he has collected; in the third he tries to work hard to regain the loss his ancestor has produced, but in the fourth the same process will repeat itself and I am the fourth - a big spender".

So, the lesson of that is that the chances of survival of attempted humour across linguistic barriers are pretty slim. Well, I now have very great pleasure in introducing Anthony Frodsham who is going to chair today's conference. Anthony ...

Opening Address - Mr A Frodsham

My first duty as Chairman of the conference is to give a paper on the Needs of Industry and the BOTB Report, which, as you heard, was a committee on which I sat and found very interesting. May I start by saying how very grateful I am to the University of Aston for this initiative and the opportunity which I hope it is going to give us during today, to talk frankly between those who see industry's problems, maybe not always correctly, and you in the audience mostly from the educational world.

From time to time in recent years, the quality of Britain's performance in overseas situations, and particularly in her exporting role, has been questioned. There are many factors involved, but the language abilities of our exporting staff are always high on the list for unfavourable comparison with our competitor nations. A lot of time has been spent in analysing this problem; on the one hand to try to determine what industry really needs, and on the other to examine whether the academic world provides it. Recently there have been two important conferences organised by the Royal Society of Arts in conjunction with the British Overseas Trade Board. As a result of the first conference, the BOTB set up a working party, under the Chairmanship of the Duke of Kent, which produced a report arguing the case for British firms to have at their

disposal staff with technical abilities and a knowledge of languages. The report includes interesting accounts from British posts and embassies and consulates abroad about the varying needs for language proficiency and there is a valuable analysis of the languages taught in schools and the changing trends of recent years. At about the same time BETRO commissioned a report which demonstrated that by and large the more successful exporting firms, particularly those which had received the Queen's Award, employed more and better equipped language speakers than the less successful exporting companies.

I would also like to mention at this juncture an important initiative which has been taken by the University of Surrey. Not only do they have in Professor Reeves an important member of the BOTB working party, but they have pioneered the way by having the first conference of the kind that we are having today. They have encouraged industry on the one hand and academics on the other mutually to understand the needs of each other.

With that very brief background may I start by pointing out that the UK's greatest requirement today is to improve our manufacturing industry. Nearly all the economic problems which we read about, from balance of payments to inflation, would be largely resolved if we could only push our wealth creating sector to higher levels of efficiency. We lag sadly behind most of our big foreign competitors. Including North Sea Oil, the UK produces no more than 15% of its gross national product from natural resources and this makes it imperative for us to have a manufacturing industry with a strong exporting ability. North Sea Oil will make no difference to that. For it is our need to import so much which forces us to have to export into the markets of the World.

But the problems of exporting are not ones that can be left solely to industry. Since success would benefit us all, and we shall all suffer from failure to achieve results, it behoves the whole nation to take an interest in creating the background and environment which will help to make our exports flourish. Thus for you of the the teaching profession, the overcoming of our foreign language problems should be an objective which you ought to be sharing with us.

I have no wish to be critical of the past, nor to denigrate what is now done by teachers or achieved by industry. And from the teaching point of view, there is no need to abandon such established objectives as the high level of intellectual satisfaction which the study of language history and literature can bring to many. But what I hope today will achieve is to show you that the requirements of industry demand separate and urgent consideration.

Now what are these requirements? In selling, and in most overseas situations, industry must have technicians, engineers and others who are highly competent to sell, market, service and maintain their company's products. Given that essential background, they must also speak the language of their territory well enough to be reasonably at home with the customer or the agent, and able to keep in touch with local happenings through newspapers and the like. The written offers or contracts should be prepared by others with a different kind of linguistic knowledge, but in neither case will people who are only linguists be very successful in our technological world.

In most overseas situations there is a need for much more than a skilled salesman: we have to sell fewer pencils and more aircraft engines. The number of products which can be sold by pure salesmen is reducing and must continue to do so. Indeed, a valid criticism of much of British manufacturing industry today is that the value we add to the materials we work on is less than that added by our competitors. In other words, our products are not yet sophisticated enough. It has been argued that salesmen require only a superficial knowledge of their work and that a salesman learns less and less about more and more until in the end he knows nothing about everything; whilst the engineer is forever learning more and more about less and less until in the end he knows everything about nothing.

The world isn't as simple as that, but I ask you to accept that our export business depends for its success on specialists rather than generalists. By the same token, the once faithful market of the Empire and Commonwealth are, for a whole variety of reasons, no longer as open or as useful to us as they were. We find ourselves increasingly involved in the high technology markets of the Western world where robust, well-tried and old-fashioned designs have to give way to high technology products, and where the English language is not necessarily the most widely accepted. This inevitably leads to one conclusion: our marketing teams must be both technological and linguistic.

Language requirements are not confined to marketing and selling, however. Who in this room doubts that if any of us is required to meet the Chairman of say Volkswagen, or Phillips, or Olivetti, or Atlas Copco or even Peugeot that we should be facing a man of high culture whose accomplishments naturally include being able to converse in our language? Further, does anyone here expect Lord Scanlon or Terry Duffy or Moss Evans to have any knowledge of another language? And yet Vetter, the head of the German trades unions, and Löderer, the Chairman of I.G. Metall - which is the German engineering union - both speak very adequate English.

Academics often ask, "Why doesn't industry use more language graduates?" Unfortunately, language cannot be the first qualification we look for. It cannot take the place of technical knowledge or selling ability - it must be an <u>additional</u> skill within the range of a rounded person's accomplishments. Those of you who are impressed by the English-speaking ability of Dutch and German salesmen need not ask them if they have a degree in English - for I can tell you the answer in advance: they haven't.

There is, however, another reason why industry looks upon language graduates with suspicion. Whilst I was serving on the BOTB working party I interviewed a French girl married to an Englishman and living in London. She had been a teacher in France, but her qualification was not recognised in the UK. As she was anxious to teach French in British schools she decided to attend one of the colleges of London University and read for a degree in French. She told me that she learnt a lot of English during the course; that there was much concentration on French literature which was always discussed in English and for which most British students found it more convenient, contrary to instructions, to buy and work upon English translations; and that the amount of French language instruction was minimal. Indeed, most of her fellow students were unable to conduct any but the most superficial conversations in French. Surely, the very first ability one is entitled to expect of a language graduate is real fluency in that language. And we must not forget also the importance of fluency in the modern language. Looking at it another way, a foreigner learning English for business purposes would clearly be nearer to fulfilling his objective if he could read and really understand one single copy of The Times than if he had studied the entire works of Shakespeare.

Many employers have difficulty in appreciating the need for languages. This is largely because so many of the present generation were brought up in the era of Imperial trade and Imperial preferences. Many too have had contacts either restricted to the tourist and hotel industry where everyone has to speak English, or to sales departments of foreign companies. Whilst companies in other countries always staff their sales departments with English and other speakers, that is certainly not true of the buying department with whom one has to deal when exporting.

Here is a true incident which occurred recently. A British engineering company has had a valued customer in an overseas French-speaking country almost without competition for several years. Recently, a German competitor became interested and prudently sent out a young engineer with fluent French. The British team, much larger, contained only one person who could speak rather indifferent French. The first evening the local government minister in charge of buying said to the German when they were having dinner together alone, "I do like those Englishmen but it is such a strain dealing with four people, only one of whom can one understand and that only intermittently". The British firm doesn't know it yet, but quite clearly their hold on that market has suddenly become very precarious.

This anecdote confirms again that even if an employer doesn't realise it himself, a most important requirement in overseas work is an ability to converse easily and fluently in the appropriate language. No one expects grammatical perfection. We certainly don't of foreigners speaking English, and are tolerant enough of native English speakers from other lands. But the ability to comprehend, to read, to make oneself understood and unflaggingly to sustain conversations are real advantages in all kinds of overseas situations.

There is an oft repeated myth that technical language is very difficult and can't easily be assimilated. I don't believe that this is true. If you are not a doctor, you will find that medical talk in English is very difficult and even if you speak French well, you will nevertheless be totally lost in medical French. However, if you are a doctor with a reasonable background of French you will very soon be at home in French medical language. Again, the uninitiated, and many of these are senior management in industry, do not understand that really good writing in another language is often beyond even the most accomplished speaker. Of course, a quick letter to thank a host should be within the ability of most speakers of other languages, but contracts, reports, detailed submissions etc. are another matter. If in such subjects the highest standards are required, there is no alternative to using a well-educated translator whose mother tongue is the language concerned. To write really well in another language needs a very much more advanced level of knowledge than industry will usually require for its marketing staff, and it is unreasonable for employers to expect their technical and sales staff to be able to write fluently in their other languages; other arrangements have to be made for that.

I would now like to turn to two aspects where industry and academics are far from understanding each other's problems. A company will suddenly discover good business opportunities in a country for which it has no linguistic skills. It then expects to find a concentrated language course to solve its problems and may well complain because its employees, chosen purely because they are the right technical people and with little regard to other aptitudes, don't immediately become fluent.

Perhaps the teaching profession doesn't easily understand how these situations can come about and why. The teaching profession may, indeed with some justification, point out that industry should plan its export programmes with more foresight. But, for its part, the profession is under the delusion that cheaper courses, offered perhaps by state-maintained bodies, are more attractive to industry than more expensive ones from perhaps the private sector. I really don't believe that in the situations that I have described money is a major factor. Industry would be more concerned by the quality of the course and especially by its appropriateness to the particular situation. Industry realises, or should do, that to make money you first have to spend money. A German electronics company recently transferred an engineer with a rather rusty knowledge of French to its export department, where excellent French was a necessity. They unhesitatingly spent £500 on a specially tailored three-week course for this man which included layouts and wording for letters, telexes, and so on. They said it was cheap at the price and would have been quite unimpressed by a general purpose laboratory course for £20.

So, on the one hand, teaching institutions who believe employers will be greatly influenced by the low costs of the course offered, and on the other, employers who think that there is little to the learning of a language that a concentrated course of 100 hours duration will not provide, are equally wrong. The teaching institutes have to recognise that employers often want a tailor-made course rather than a cheap one. And employers must realise that the acquiring of relevant languages by their staff must be part of a longer term marketing programme.

Industrial managers face certain particular problems. They need to be helped to realise the complexities of language learning, but also to understand the benefits which such knowledge will bring to them, to our country and to their own employers. They must be helped to choose the members of their staff who have the aptitude to learn, and to be guided towards the language training establishment which will meet their particular needs.

The ability to learn languages is clearly not evenly distributed amongst everyone; yet managements have no means of selecting employees for language training or for the sort of responsibilities which will ultimately require the knowledge of languages. The only way they could do this at the moment is to choose those who most want to learn a language. Given equal ability this would probably be as good a method as any, but abilities aren't equal. I understand the Foreign Office use a selection test, called Modern Languages Aptitude Test to help choose people with the right aptitudes. I don't think this is used at all in industry and I think it is time that something were done about that.

I suggest that the teaching profession might usefully look at the balance of its courses in order to provide a really good background to the future development of language knowledge. For example, since Latin is disappearing from so many school syllabi, it becomes increasingly necessary to teach English more carefully and thoroughly. For anyone who doesn't know much about his own language will find learning a foreign one that much more difficult. If he can't distinguish between an adverb and an adjective in his own tongue, he will not easily grasp the curiously irrelevant but nonetheless vital custom in many other languages of providing inanimate objects with genders which we might regard more appropriately reserved for genuine differences of sex.

The measuring of competence in languages is also something that needs attention. I know that there are now variants on 'A' and 'O' level examinations which will help to measure a proficiency in language comprehension and speaking, but there is much to be said for moving towards common standards within all languages of the Community. At present it is fair to say that we in industry can't judge a person's competence in a language for our purposes from any of the more traditional academic qualifications. It is time for a more reliable indicator, preferably with steps which can measure progressive improvement. This is a subject, as you will know from your programme, which will be further developed by several other speakers this morning and we shall also have some opportunity to discuss the subject just before lunch. Well, ladies and gentlemen, that concludes my introductory remarks.

We shall shortly be hearing a series of interesting presentations by people who are masters of their subjects. However before we do that we have thirty minutes or so in which to discuss the needs of industry and to amplify what I have been trying to say. I would, therefore, like to invite comments from you and questions on what I have already said by way of introduction. That doesn't mean to say that people who have ideas and points or comments upon which I haven't touched should feel shy about putting them forward. So, ladies and gentlemen, may I have comments and questions from you.

Julian Bell, Language Teacher, Leicester

I put this question to meetings of teachers in Leicestershire occasionally and it has been greeted with some mirth but I think the atmosphere you have already created may prevent that. Just as you will never learn to swim until you enter the water, I feel that we will never change the climate of opinion about languages until those languages are used. Now, I noticed today on the programme nobody is going to speak in anything but English, and I think we have got to get to the stage whereby we accept that it is possible to address English people in another language and that they will understand reasonably. Would you like to comment on this?

AF That is a very good point. I suppose that when addressing such a distinguished gathering today, the disadvantage is that although, other than English, we all speak at least three or four other languages, we probably don't have one in common so it might make it very difficult if I were to address you all in Chinese, shall we say, this morning. However, may I just take the underlying part of that point further. What we never do as Britons is to take the trouble to speak in the language of people we are speaking to. I include myself in this. Some years ago I was required to address a conference in Italy. Two previous speakers were American and they has both used the translation facilities. My Italian isn't very good but it is adequate, and I thought I would start my talk in Italian; but I hadn't prepared it properly and after a while I decided to revert to English, being very conscious of my rather indifferent Italian. When I said that that was as far as I could go in Italian and I was now going to revert to English there was a groan in the room. Obviously my bad Italian was much better than the rather dehumanised translation one tends to get on these occasions.

So, when we are addressing people in another country, do let us make the small effort to try and speak to them in their own language. It only means a few more hours preparation, if you know the language already.

One innovation which is coming out very soon, is television via satellite, and one of the interesting things about that is that it doesn't fit at all to the kind of switches you have got on your television set. It isn't limited to one country and therefore what we will be able to receive is the whole of England, France, the Netherlands and part of Germany all in one transmission. This does raise, I think, the opportunity of getting another language into our homes. I can't help but feel that this may be beginning to follow down your road.

Joan Lyon, Notre Dame High School, St. Helens

I should like to direct this question particularly to Sir Adrian Cadbury, Mr Chairman. I should like to know from him what efforts are made in firms, and perhaps in particular in his firm, to indentify individuals in their sales staff who have one language which they speak fluently, and consequently individuals whom they could use in their export overseas division: whether deliberate efforts are made in this direction because I have particular knowledge of individuals who have been terribly keen to be used overseas and who have had successful experience in the sales department and yet who have kicked their heels, become impatient and eventually left.

Sir A C Well, perhaps I can start off and then hand over to Anthony who can obviously speak from a much broader base. Certainly with anyone we take on we obviously do note such qualifications as language and, in fact, language is one of the easier things to have a data bank on. I think though the point that Anthony Frodsham made is very important: that is that we inevitably start with the ability to do whatever job it is that we have taken the person on for, whether it is as an engineer or whether it is as a sales and marketing manager and then obviously if we can marry that up with language ability we do so. We are short of people who have the necessary linguistic skills and it clearly would be a great waste of a scarce resource if we do not in fact take advantage of language ability. This is not only, of course, on the selling side of the business. If you take a factory like Bournville, the ability among some of the people on the clerical side to be able to deal with communications which come in in other languages; or of the telephone staff to deal with foreign telephone calls ... All of that is important to us. So, I would say yes, we certainly take note of these abilities and try to use them. What I think we don't do anything like well enough is to encourage people who haven't got these abilities to acquire them. If they can add language skills to their business abilities, they become that much more useful to us and to themselves. I think it is in that area that we don't do anything like as much as we should. But I wonder Anthony whether you would talk more generally.

AF I think the most important point that has been made is the fact that technical ability must come first and that languages are only a support to that. It is foolish to think that because you can speak a language you can necessarily do the job. If you just pause to think of the situation at home, you wouldn't choose somebody from your organisation to go out on a technical sales mission just because he could speak English.

However, nearly all firms nowadays, and indeed for the last twenty years, have invited new people joining their staff to enter on their personnel record form their language abilities and as the Chancellor said, it is not a difficult thing to classify and record.

James McLaren, Language teacher, Repton School, Derbyshire

I have been teaching modern languages for eight years, having spent eight years in export marketing myself before moving over into teaching. My question really is this: how do you know that you cannot train a linguist to become a technologist? Do you have any proof that you must do it the other way round by starting off with your technologist and then looking to see whether he has linguistic ability? Have you tried the alternative method of getting a linguist and saying this is a machine and it works like this and giving him some training perhaps to be able to understand the technology of it?

AF I must be forgiven for saying that if you are selling confectionery that might be possible. But it certainly isn't possible with sophisticated products.

Could I give you an example from my own experience, which was a mistake made about twenty years ago. I was then in a firm of consultants. We had had a great deal of experience in this country in the shipbuilding industry and also in a number of countries abroad. We were very pleased one day to get a major contract for the Chantiers de l'Atlantique in France. We decided, after a lot of discussion, that it was important to use some of our good consultants who were essentially French speaking. We didn't actually have anybody with shipbuilding experience who could speak French, but we did have some very good French speakers who were experienced in other sectors. We gave them a very thorough review of what we had done in the shipbuilding industry and sent them to Saint Nazaire.

It was a mistake; the French were very quick to discover they weren't really shipbuilding experts. You have to do several years in a shipyard to learn the sort of work we had done, and there was no way round that. It might have been easier and better to have taken the shipbuilding people and tried to give them enough elements of French, if they had had a sufficient basis on which to build.

Nigel Holden, Correspondent "Export Times" and Director, Worldwide Language

For some time I have been an advocate for what I call linguistics for management, which I don't think is necessarily my own term. It may be helpful to mention what we have done once successfully and what we continue to do successfully by way of a short introduction to companies, preferably large ones, on the complexities of the world we are up against and which they want to sell to. The first thing we tell them is the role of spoken and written languages in international business in a linguistically differentiated world, and we support all the talk with linguistic maps which we have specially devised and other graphical material which is relevant. We then go on to explain the distribution of language according to their type, genetic relationship and their commercial importance. Then we talk about the development of the language and the distribution of scripts and alphabets and then, and we feel this is very important, we then give a brief introduction on what we think businessmen should know about the principal languages with which we are concerned, that is Chinese, Arabic and Russian. And we finally wind up by talking about the problems of translation, and the problems of producing technical and publicity material in various languages. Now this is, we think, a new approach but a much needed approach, the idea being of

course that people will then become more interested in language and we may help to break down a small psychological barrier between doing the real important thing which is learning a language and one day speaking it.

Ken Dickson, French teacher, Repton School

It seems to me that one of the problems of placing first importance to a technical skill and only secondary importance to a language one is that we are bound then to end up with people who are stronger on the one side than the other. To put the case at its simplest, if a company is looking for bilingual secretaries I would have thought they have a better chance of finding competent ones if they were to advertise for a bilingual secretary in the first place. If they followed the alternative approach of recruiting those who were competent secretaries and then looking among them for those who happened to have a second or third language, I don't think they would end up with very satisfactory employees. It is another danger that we are doing the same thing with engineers and technical salesmen - we seek first technical competence and then hope, incidentally, to find linguistic competence. The amount of money that has to be offered to a bilingual secretary is clearly of a different order from that offered to an ordinary secretary. If industry made it clear that there was, separate from its demand for technologists, another demand for bilingual technolgists I don't think it would be long before the educational services of the country began to train such people. I don't think it long before there would be the demand from people in training, from their parents, for that kind of course. Without that I think the problem is likely to continue.

AF May I just say before I invite the next speaker that I avoid the word bilingual; my definition of the word is that when somebody walks into the room and starts speaking to you in your own laguage, you can't discover if he is German or French because his English is just as good as his mother tongue. I have only met two or three people in the world who are as competent as that.

But I don't think that bilingualism is material to what we have been talking about. I was trying to explain that it is not perfection in the language that is needed for our purposes.

David Walker, Head of Sixth Form, Daventry Southbrook Comprehensive School

You stress the importance of technical ability first. Could you explain how you intend to turn the curriculum upside-down, both at secondary school and in universities and polytechnics, because anybody who comes forward and says they want to do Maths, Physics and French is automatically attacked by everybody, bar maybe one member of staff who says get on with it and see what happens, which is my attitude. But you get other people saying, what are you doing suggesting that to him for? You daren't go forward unless there is a great deal of support and a great deal of evidence that shows the individual concerned's parents, and particularly people who would like them to do their own 'A' level subjects and not French, that there is going to be some sort of future for them at the end of it. I have just done the syllabus for next year's sixth form. 20 people want to do English, but of those only three want to do French and only one, a girl, wants to do English, French and German. But from what you are saying there are not many avenues for somebody with those sort of 'A' levels. But at the moment there are a number of avenues that take her into higher education; if she chooses to do, instead of English for instance Maths or Chemistry, neither of which you can do because of the blocking system anyway, what are other people going to turn round and say? What are the universities

going to do when she arrives and says that she is doing French, German and Chemistry at 'A' level and they automatically say well, you should have done X, Y or Z? What you are asking, from my reading of the situation, is stand the whole thing up on its head, give it a damn good shake and let's start again, but that is going to take a tremendous amount of doing.

AF I suspect that you don't fully understand my role, because you started off by saying that I was proposing to turn the whole thing upon its head. What I am trying to do is to explain to the teaching profession the problems of industry, which is not quite the same thing. I am not seeking to reorganise the teaching profession. However we shall be hearing more about changed examinations later on this morning and perhaps they may be the moment to consider the balance between the various 'A' levels which you have been referring to. The previous speaker was really talking on the same lines. But it is no use shouting "industry must make use of linguists" because you have to accept that industry can't do it. Remember my story about the shipyard at Saint Nazaire. It is no use saying that we could have handled it with linguists, because the man we put on the job was, in fact, one of the few who really is bilingual French-English, but he couldn't sell himself because he lacked the technical knowledge. And that is the point that we are asking the academic world to understand.

John Hainsworth, German teacher, Head of Sixth Form, Wolfreton High School, Hull

A number of universities and more particularly polytechnics have been introducing joint courses which involve a language component. Normally though that is not a joint course with, say, engineering and a language but more commonly business studies and a language. I wonder how attractive the products of courses of that kind are to industry?

AF At a postgraduate level there is no doubt that the students who successfully get their MBA at INSEAD are always in very high demand. As you know, courses in INSEAD are supposedly all given in three languages.

I also hear that the European Business School is establishing itself shortly in this country and is to offer a three-year course in business studies in the three main European languages. I think this is going to be a great help and I think those sort of people will be in much demand by industry.

May I say that the Engineering Employers' Federation have decided to help one university financially, on a pilot basis, to run an engineering degree with a language component. This is going to include, in addition to the academic course, a practical year in either French or German which we shall be helping to arrange. I hope we might be able to do this on a two-way basis with the countries concerned.

One of my objectives in this language work we have been doing, has been to impress upon employers and industry how important it is to look for people who speak languages and to make good use of them. I have very much in mind an earlier question when somebody was saying, "Well, industry often employs people who are both good linguists and good salesmen/technologists but somehow or other they don't seem to be used properly." This is a message that industry needs to absorb and to appreciate the value of the people they already have.

Colin Trim, Head of Modern Languages, Backwell School, Avon

I think that industrialists and language teachers have one very great problem in common: that selling our services is as great a problem to us as selling your products is to you. Motivation is something, of course, as language teachers we are very concerned with. Many parents I find pay lip service certainly to the aims and the objectives of modern language courses but it is only lip service. Very often there is very sceptical support in the end. You need parental support. Modern languages is an area of the curriculum where parental support is so vital - getting children abroad during their course. I do believe that the voice of industry could carry more weight with parents and with the general public than it does at present. Could I therefore merely make the plea that the conclusions and the recommendations of the BOTB study group be published more widely and more directly to the general public, rather than just coming through schools.

AF I entirely agree with that. We will help parents to understand the problem more when industry stipulates a language need more often. More advertisments are appearing in the press now, demanding French or German or whatever as an essential part of the qualification that is needed. The more parents see that and the more they understand the problems, the more we shall get pressure from parents. I do agree that encouragement from parents will help to motivate the children.

Roger Howes, Head of German, King Henry VIII School, Coventry

Picking up what was said by the last speaker, I would agree that modern languages is quite often a subject that doesn't have high status with parents. We get youngsters, particularly boys, doing it to 'O' level and then they stop because they are going to do say double maths, physics or something. At our school we run an exchange (we run exchanges in both languages - French and German) and I am happy to say that we have had one or two youngsters who having stopped doing the subject at 'O' level have nevertheless, in the sixth form, continued to come on the exchange, continued to come to see their partners. Now, I wholly accept Mr Frodsham's point-the story about the shipyard, but I do feel that industry could help us a lot by offering material help for those youngsters who want to continue doing something with modern languages as well as doing the scientific subjects which are so essential for them in later industrial careers and I would like to hear any reactions to my suggestion that status should be given to the subject by giving it real material support.

AF I fully agree. Industry has got to make clear that satisfactory career progression in many cases is going to depend, amongst other things, on language and that without it you are not going to do as well as those who have it.

At some of the colleges of London University you can take the language in the unit structure for degrees which you don't have to have taken at 'A' level. If you have done it at 'O' level the course will bring you to the equivalent of an A/O. That scheme is helpful because it maintains the interest in language whilst you are perhaps reading for some technical degree.

Graham Vickery, Bournville College of Further Education, Birmingham

My question is to do with our attempt to follow the path which you have been prescribing, sir, for the past fifteen months to attract students from industry and commerce into the college to study language courses. We advertised pretty widely and if I may quote a line from one of our advertisements in Midlands Industry and Commerce magazine it says "Intensive training in French, German and Spanish available on courses designed for individual and company needs". Again, I indicate some of the content of the courses: areas of study would include face-to-face conversation in a business context, dealing with correspondence, preparing a digest of articles in the foreign language, composition of advertisements, letters and so on. We tried very hard to cater specifically for the student in a number of languages at a number of different levels and after advertising widely we have had minimal response over the past fifteen months. My question is, sir, what are we doing wrong?

AF I don't think you are doing anything wrong. We are up against the lethargy of the whole country on this. Whilst I take the points that were made earlier in that we have to have a go at parents and the general public, the present programme has really been designed to encourage industrialists to understand the need for language training and to enable academics to see the problems of industry. You must remember that most of the people in top positions in industry today were brought up in the era of Empire trade; they never needed languages for the purposes of industry - and what you never had you never miss. If I may remind you of the story of the four British engineers who were in a French-speaking territory and were being undermined by a French-speaking German. We have got to get across to senior people in industry that there is a real need for young Britons to speak languages well.

Emanuel Toutoungi, Director Eurolang Centre

We provide extensive language courses for businessmen. My personal experience is precisely that, to carry on the point you have been making that industrialists and employers expect, whether it is colleges or even the more serious private languages schools to work miracles with people. In other words, they ring up on a Friday and they would like somebody to be able to speak German the following Friday. That's the kind of request that I usually get. Do you not feel that you, as leaders in industry, must work considerably harder to get across to the employers that learning a language takes time and that therefore there must be an ongoing commitment to language learning first of all from them, allowing the senior managers, the senior and middle executives time in order to achieve a reasonable standard of fluency so that they could sell their product in an intelligible way when they get abroad?

AF I agree and there is another point. A lot of people who encourage staff to learn languages find that they fall by the wayside. This must be the experience of many of you - whilst people start enthusiastically, classes gradually diminish as time goes on. Employers, begin by thinking, "Well I shall have three or four people in a while who will speak such and such a language"; so I shall give them time off and pay the fees; but gradually time goes by, the pupils lose interest and many in the end learn nothing at all. Employers would undoubtedly be helped with more success stories, but I am not saying that that is the fault of the teaching system. It may largely be the fault of the selection system.

John Stone, Bournville College of Further Education

One of the things that has come out for me today is this, that you Mr Frodsham have said a number of things that absolutely hit the nail on the head. The one about rejecting the idea of bilingual standards. Now, I have been talking English for 40 years and I think my English is superb but you can all tell it has got a foreign accent. I don't mind admitting it. What I have realised after 20 years in industry and 15 years teaching, mainly modern languages as well as business studies, I realised that there isn't any real recognition of the difficulties involved. Many people say, "Oh yes don't they learn English quickly". Of course they learn English quickly because English in many ways can be acquired on the superficial level far more easily than say German and no doubt Russian and Chinese and Arabic. Therefore when we meet foreigners who talk good English we aren't aware of the fact that they have had to do far less of a job and that brings out the point previously made. I don't think we in education are even conscious enough as language teachers of the great difficulties between one language and another. I teach two languages and I find the approach of one examining board entirely different relating to one subject and another. Taking up the point my colleague made we have had some response but the problem is numbers and we have got to make it commercial; and it's got to be an ongoing process and it's got to be understood by industry, possibly by people in the personnel department, that there is genuinely a case not only at the degree level but for the kind of people who set up machinery - that they can communicate with their fellows when they are in Germany or France or something like that. So there is a modest sort of area of skill which cannot really be provided by schools; which wouldn't be provided by higher education; but which can be provided either commercially or in further education.

David Cragg, Lecturer in Charge of Languages, Warley College

My chief area of interest and of four full-time staff and several part-time staff in our section is specifically in providing both general and tailored courses for industry - intensive and the sort of two sessions a week.

I would first of all like to give a bit of encouragement to my colleague from Bournville and say that we are providing 100 hours teaching per week solely in industry on our different courses; that we are teaching something in the region of 250 students this year, both in intensive and general courses for industry; and again I am not talking specifically about secretarial work; I am talking about people already working in industry and being given time off during work and after work for this kind of study. What I would say to come back to the point made by the head of Eurolang, about the need for enlightenment on the industrial side: it is all the old story of results wanted yesterday or next week at any rate. There is a desperate need - I'm pleased to see that we recognise this by this very conference and I'm pleased to say within our own area we have seen that the need is gradually being recognised; there is a desperate need for senior industrialists to give this sort of work a priority, because as things stand now until the problems really emerge and there are desperate difficulties on the sales side and communications problem, nobody comes along and says can we have a course. And furthermore then when they do want a course they are so ready to fall for the one-off course. This is a long term job. You are not going to teach people a foreign language in a month. You are going to scratch the surface, you are going to give them basically a good grounding and what is more, and a point which you raised and which is very important, languages are for most people in industry peripheral. And in being peripheral it is essential that progress be monitored and the facility of the individual and the

capability of the language side of the company is maintained. Because without maintaining that capability in six months time if the chap hasn't had his regular visit overseas his facility will have decreased vastly and you cannot rely on the individual to keep up his level of competence; so there is a big job on the educational side in industry. There are still so few companies who are really enlightened in the terms of this policy; and then can I also turn to my colleagues perhaps on the future educational side, and say let us stop just throwing any old commercial course at people in industry and let us really concentrate on preparing our courses properly, on our course writing and really meeting the individual needs, doing proper language surveys in advance of courses, writing courses for individuals and for individual companies - the needs of individual companies vary vastly and to just produce the jolly Ealing course in German or Interlang French or whatever is available in this particular sector of the market is just not good enough and will not serve the needs of specific people and specific areas. So I think education on both sides - for industry especially; and I hope that you can give us a big lead in that sense-nationally and locally; but also within our own sector to be as aware as possible of specific and individual needs and try and provide these all the way down the line rather than the easy option of commercial material.

AF I need hardly say that I fully agree with your sentiments. It is a mammoth task and it is going to take time, but I think there are a lot of people who are trying to work on it.

There is one thought that I would like to leave with you if I may. A speaker made the point that it appears to be so much easier for others to learn English than it is for us to learn the languages of others. Of course, English is an easier language and one's motivation is far greater to learn another language if there are few people in the world who speak your own language. Obviously if many people use your lanagage there is less of a need to learn another. But I did in my talk refer to the fact that a good grounding in English and English grammar is indeed a prerequisite to learning another language, because English is a language that you can speak very well and make yourself understood in with virtually no understanding of grammar at all. This is not true of other languages.

Examination Innovations - Mr D. Phillips, University of Oxford Department of Educational Studies

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In the Times Educational Supplement a couple of years ago there was a cartoon showing a harassed French teacher on a cross-channel ferry with a group of eager children clustered around him. They were apparently having a final briefing session. But all the French teacher could offer in the way of advice was this: "Remember everyone, je ne parle pas francais". This sense of the inevitability of failure, shared by teacher and pupil alike, is one which has dogged language teaching since the heady days of expansion in the mid-sixties. I do not have to rehearse the reasons for our concern.

I do not think, however, that in the last few years a great deal has been done to counter the tendency towards decline. Of particular concern has been the need to find appropriate aims and objectives for the majority of children who now study foreign languages. Special efforts have rightly been made to solve the problems experienced by average and less able learners and various new courses, together with the graded test movement, especially the pioneer work in Oxfordshire, have provided a welcome new impetus to language teaching for those who teach children who normally drop their language learning after a compulsory three-year period.

There is still a very worrying drop-out rate at the fourth year option stage and - to my mind - an even more worrying situation two years later. We are simply not attracting enough good linguists in the sixth form. We have rightly concentrated our attention of late on improving our provision for the average learner: it is time now to consider whether enough concern has been expressed about the more able linguist. Teaching and examining methods need to be reconsidered, particularly post 'O' level. Advanced level syllabuses, with their emphasis on literary studies and formal translation work, provide little attraction for a lot of competent linguists who have achieved success at 'O' level and who wish then to pursue their language studies with a view to the practical application of the skills involved.

In 1976 the British Petroleum Company suggested to the Department of Educational Studies in Oxford that the one term education fellowships it had established at Keble College might usefully be devoted to research in modern languages in schools. The Department felt that in view of the constant concern about the relatively small numbers of post 'O' level linguists it would be valuable to investigate the possibilities of promoting sixth form non-specialist courses in modern languages.

The first fellow to work on this project in Oxford was David Spawforth of Wellington College and he, together with the Department, brought together a number of local teachers interested in running non-specialist courses and developed with them the outline of a syllabus in German. This syllabus was to lead to an examination consisting of the following elements:

1. An oral test in which candidates would be expected to explain in German the contents of a letter written in English to a non-English speaking German; to engage in three role playing exercises, and to hold a short bilingual conversation with the examiner;

2. A listening comprehension test with pre-recorded items: these items would include such things as news bulletins, weather forecasts and traffic reports as well as general conversations. Candidates would answer questions in English;

3. A reading comprehension test;

4. A written test in which candidates would have to:

   (a) complete a German form;

   (b) write a letter to a hotel;

   (c) write a letter of thanks;

5. A short essay on German institutions.

   Dictionaries would be used throughout the examination.

Experience shows that sixth form courses which are not examined are much more difficult to get off the ground, and so from the start we felt that it would be right to dangle the carrot of an extra qualification before potential non-specialist linguists. Accordingly we approached two examination boards in the hope that the proposed syllabus, or something like it, could be incorporated into their examination offerings.

The Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board responded very favourably: by chance proposals of a similar nature had been submitted by Mr Gill Leech of St. Edmund's School, Canterbury, and accepted in a revised form, and so a framework existed for a new syllabus in German which would take account of our proposals.

The syllabuses eventually adopted by the Board - after much discussion - now led to an examination with the following elements:

I Listening Comprehension
(Questions and answers in English on a passage or passages in German read live or recorded, by the teacher. The text will be of a topical nature, in the form of e.g. a news bulletin, public announcements, sports report, etc.)

II Reading Comprehension
(Candidates will be required to summarise in continuous English prose the content of a passage in German. The passage will be of a topical interest.)

III (a) A business letter in German to be translated into English
(b) An answer to this letter to be written in German (approximately 110-130 words), giving such information as is required in the rubric.

IV Questions based on contemporary German society
(Candidates will be required to write short answers in English)

Oral: (25% of total subject marks)

(a) Getting information: A telephone conversation based on a prepared, structured situation

(b) Giving information: A prepared, structured conversation based on, for example, the entertaining of a foreign visitor

(c) Discussion based on travel brochures, railway timetables, advertisements, diagrams, charts, Speisekarte, etc.

(The material for the oral will be given to candidates the day before examination.)

The proposed title for the original submission was 'Certificate of Proficiency in Advanced German' but this was changed to - in our view - the less satisfactory one of 'German for Business Studies'. The title is misleading, since the aims of the syllabus are broader than that would imply, but almost every other suggestion made contained an implied criticism of other syllabuses and examinations offered at the same level - terms like Everyday German, Spoken German, Further German were suggested: even by one cynic 'Real' German!

The aims of the syllabus were stated by the project organisers to be:

(1) to enable non-specialist sixth-form linguists to use and understand the German language in a variety of everyday situations and at a level beyond that which they would normally have reached at the age of 16;

(2) to develop a deeper understanding of German people and their way of life.

And the objectives, the skills to be achieved by the end of the course were:

(1) The ability to understand everyday German spoken at a normal pace by native speakers;

(2) The ability to speak German with such a degree of fluency and accuracy that it would be understood by a German with little or no knowledge of English;

(3) The ability to understand written German at a level normally reached by a native reader of average ability in this skill;

(4) The ability to write simple but accurate German on topics of a practical nature.

We were sorry to see some of the original ideas go. A form-filling exercise would, we felt, have been a useful activity; so too would practice in holding bilingual conversations, with each participant speaking his own language. But we believe that the German syllabus in its present form reflects the intentions of the project and provides sufficient opportunity for important skills - and particularly those of listening and understanding and reading and understanding - to be developed to a high level.

Once the syllabus had been accepted and a number of trial schools identified the BP education fellows in the terms following David Spawforth's work, set about developing teaching materials for the course and large batches of such materials were sent to Schools between the autumn of 1977 and the summer of 1978. Regular meetings were held, and a good spirit of co-operation and mutual support developed among those taking part in the project. The Department of Educational Studies remained the focal point of the activity and we were pleased to become involved in what soon turned into an important curriculum development project. Some financial assistance was provided by BP to support the schools involved with the buying of new materials.

The first candidates took the examinations in French and German for Business Studies in the summer of 1978. The total number of candidates sitting the papers was:

French: 177

German: 61

The success rate was particularly gratifying.

In German 88.5% achieved grades A - C, over half of these achieving A's or B's. In French as many as 89.83% achieved grades A - C with about 58% of these scoring A's or B's.

In 1979 the entry increased considerably, but comparable standards were maintained: the increase in entries for French was 84% and for German 57% A - C grades were gained by 88% of the total entries in French and 86% in German: again more than 50% of these candidates in each subject were awarded grades A or B.

The Examiners' reports on the two years of examining indicate that candidates found writing in the foreign language and translating from it most difficult. This is still worrying: while I would wish to emphasise the importance of the receptive skills of listening and understanding and reading and understanding, and the skill of speaking and making oneself understood, I would not wish to encourage neglect of the more formal aspects of language learning which result in written accuracy. I am however very conscious of the fact that pre-occupation with perfection in modern language examinations has led to many candidates over the years failing to show evidence of their considerable abilities in other perhaps more important areas of language competence, amongst which I would certainly count the skill of listening and understanding, which is arguably both the most important skill to acquire and that which comes most easily to the majority of learners.

A series of pronouncements in recent years has supported the view that not enough is being done to promote courses for the sixth form non-specialist linguist.

Two documents from the Inspectorate in 1977 emphasised the need for non-specialist language courses in the sixth form. The first, Mathematics, Science and Modern Languages in Maintained Schools in England, described the failure to offer pupils specialising in science, mathematics, history or other subjects the opportunity to continue their language study as a major weakness in sixth form language provision, and regretted the fact that those who possess reasonable mastery of a language at sixteen have lost such mastery by the age of eighteen and consequently compare unfavourably with their European counterparts. The second, Modern Languages in Comprehensive Schools, recommended that 'courses (be) made available for non-specialists who may wish to continue the study of a language in which they have already achieved a measure of success or to start a new language'. At the same time, the HMC Report on the Teaching and Examination of Modern Languages recommended that examining boards should be encouraged 'to produce an examination for post O-level non-specialists, relevant to both arts and science sides of the sixth form, to prepare pupils for the type of language work and vocabulary they will meet in industry and commerce' and that headmasters should aim to establish at least one foreign language as a core subject in the sixth form, with a post O-level qualification in view.

Later in the year the then Secretary of State, Mrs Shirley Williams, returned to the subject of the early specialisation which results in a large number of pupils dropping mathematics and foreign languages too early. Speaking at the annual conference of the Association of Assistant Mistresses in March, she described such early specialisation as 'crazy for a trading nation' and suggested that a foreign language should be continued, at least

as a subsidiary subject into the sixth form - 'Industry and science are not becoming insular. They are necessarily international. Thousands of our boys and girls will be insufficiently equipped for their future careers if they do not retain their ability to speak a foreign language.' - Mrs Williams suggested that major contributions could be made (particularly by girls) to such weak areas in our industries as design, marketing and after-sales service.

The BOTB Report of course echoes such concern and encourages schools to place more emphasis on developing a practical linguistic fluency in their pupils.

If only a fraction of the good linguists who are forced by our examination system to drop their languages because they want or have to specialise in other areas, can be persuaded to continue their languages for a further year, the pool of linguists available to employers in commerce and industry would increase considerably.

The need for such syllabuses as those I have described has then often been demonstrated. Professor Eric Hawkins recently lamented the passing of the old subsidiary papers which could be taken after one year in the sixth form in pre GCE days:

'The subsidiary paper in HSC before 1951 was a target which attracted the non-specialist linguist. Its value was attested by the most convincing of all tests - the numbers of sixth formers who took it each year. Far more sixth formers used to enter for the subsidiary papers in French than for the principal papers.

The consequences of this disastrous decision (that is, to drop languages after O-levels) have affected both universities and schools. First year undergraduates in many disciplines now discover (too late) what a mistake they made in dropping their foreign language after reaching a respectable standard at 16-plus. Doors are at present closed at 16-plus which would remain open much longer, given the old subsidiary target.'

An encouraging sign has been the recent announcement that a working party of the Schools Council has made proposals for a new intermediate level examination, half way between O and A-level. The provision of this examination would help to broaden the sixth form curriculum: it would, it is proposed, take about half the time of an A-level subject and be spread over two years. Unlike the one-year CEE examination, it would be aimed at pupils with good O-level passes.

Further details of these proposals have just been announced in a report from the Schools Council called Secondary Examinations Post 16: a Programme of Improvements. The report indicates that the new I-level examination would be appropriate for two groups of pupils: those who do not intend to go on to higher education but who stay on for two years in the sixth form, and those who are taking A-levels in other subjects and who would otherwise be prevented from continuing with a subject which they had enjoyed and in which they had achieved success at O-level. I believe this to be a very important development, and one which could inject new life into sixth form language studies.

The Oxford and Cambridge syllabuses are at present offered at AO-level - if the new 'I'-level examinations were to be introduced they would seem to fit the requirements admirably. The main drawback of the AO-level examination - which requires a high standard of performance - is that it has only the status of O-level: a proper intermediate level examination would be much more attractive.

The Oxford and Cambridge syllabuses are not the only syllabuses available. Since 1977 the London Board has offered an AO syllabus in French examined by means of a reading comprehension, an essay stimulated by a reading passage, an essay in English on an aspect of French life, and a listening comprehension. The examination, the printed syllabus states:

> 'will be largely a test of practical language ability and will be concerned with topics of contemporary interest in a French context. The ability to understand and use French as a medium for conveying information and opinion will be more important than the observation of every grammatical nicety. Credit will be given for knowledge of France and French affairs acquired through French or English, but it is hoped that much of the candidate's preparation will be in French. The candidate will be expected to show some critical ability and not merely factual knowledge.'

Similar syllabuses are available in German, Italian and Russian.

The Joint Matriculation Board has developed a new syllabus at AO-level in French Studies, to be examined for the first time in 1981. The aims of the syllabus are stated to be:

> 'to offer the opportunity of GCE certification for the outcome of courses designed (i) to equip the non-specialist linguist with the necessary linguistic skills to enable him to understand and interpret written and spoken material in French on a variety of subjects which may or may not include his own specialisms, (ii) to provide him with knowledge of various aspects of France, French life and French culture.
>
> The emphasis throughout the syllabus is on comprehension (the passive skills of listening and reading) rather than production (the active skills of speaking and writing).
>
> The course is envisaged as a 'service' course, complementary to or contrasting with the candidate's main areas of study and including topics which should be useful and of interest to those studying a wide range of main subjects.'

Space will not allow a detailed description of the content: basically there is a core syllabus consisting of the study of France through the medium of French, with two optional topics chosen from three fields: (a) scientific and technological; (b) socio-political; and (c) literature, philosophy and the creative arts.

The Cambridge Board, I am told, is currently considering the possibility of developing an intermediate level examination aimed at sixth formers not necessarily specialising in languages, presumably an examination of the kind envisaged by the Schools Council.

At A-level there are now moves towards cutting down the amount of literature studied. The Southern Universities Joint Board already have an alternative A-level syllabus which includes a project of 3,000 words instead of literary studies, and the Oxford Local Board is developing a language-only syllabus in French at A-level, and plans have been drawn up for a similar syllabus by the London Board.

The recent and current uncertainty about the future of examinations at 16+ and 18+ has inhibited the development of new syllabuses and the Boards will be reluctant to introduce new proposals until some of this uncertainty is dispelled. Meanwhile the Oxford and Cambridge papers are available to all Boards through the inter-Board borrowed papers scheme. In the case of Oxford Locals and Cambridge Locals, with the increased collaboration between these boards and the Oxford and Cambridge Board, it is likely that future syllabus development will be shared by all three boards.

I should like to finish with a plea for more experimentation in post O-level language provision. Perhaps it is wrong to think in terms of specialists and non-specialists. Certainly in the BP project we found that many schools were able to teach the non-specialists together with the A-level groups. In the case of the particular AO-syllabus involved both sides benefitted: the A-level groups improved because often greater demands were made of them as far as speaking and listening to the languages were concerned, and the non-specialists benefited from association with well-motivated A-level students. (It might not go unnoticed that this ploy causes sixth-form language group numbers to look healthier than they may otherwise seem!)

We might eventually look in a different way at sixth-form language work, perhaps developing it on a modular basis, with students attending courses building up to A- or AO- or I-level, or CEE, with considerable overlap in attendance at particular courses. We might too consider whether languages should be part of a common core in the sixth form: if study of a modern language became the norm then what a difference that would make to the foreign language competence of the future leaders of this country in so many fields.

Foreign Language Examinations of the Royal Society of Arts - Miss F Webster

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Since the time when the Royal Society of Arts ran examinations for gas-light service engineers and for over a hundred years, RSA examinations have been vocational in nature. In particular we have a long tradition of vocational examining in the business and commerce field. You will undoubtedly know of our examinations in such subjects as shorthand, typing, book-keeping, accountancy and store-keeping. The language examinations offered by the RSA were originally intended for adult students who were perhaps not catered for by the more academic 'O' and 'A' levels. Now, because of changes in schools towards more vocational work in the 5th and 6th form, many teachers are seeing the Board's examinations as being relevant for their students, bearing in mind that they have been written for adults. A good example of this trend is the Languages for the Office examination, which was introduced in 1975. This examination is taken not only in Colleges of Further Education and other centres of education catering for adult students but also in many schools. It is now in Spanish as well as French and German. It was set up in response to lecturers' and employers' demands for a basic, practical qualification in the business use of a language. The level of language on entry to a course leading to these examinations is approximately 'O' level, so that when candidates have taken the examinations they have reached around 'A' level standard. The committee responsible for it and for modifications to the syllabus includes not only teachers but also other interested parties, for example a representative of an employment agency specialising in recruiting language staff. In this way it is hoped to ensure that the examination will be vocational. It is designed for office workers and management trainees. The paper can be typed and if it is, an endorsement is given on the certificate, but it is in no sense a secretarial examination, being taken by men and women alike. It can, however, act as a useful adjunct for a secretary who is, say, taking a qualification as a bilingual secretary and wants some sort of certificate in a subsidiary language.

The sort of language required is unashamedly more receptive than productive, although this does not mean that the candidate is not required to converse in the language - because this is an important part of the examination. Teachers designing courses aiming at this examination will need to teach their pupils to summarise a passage of commercial prose; this exercise was put in as a result of practical observation of what goes on in offices; our own surveys have also shown that this is a skill in great demand. Candidates have to write routine replies to a choice of business letters from notes in English. The business and commerce background of the country is tested by the writing of two short accounts. English business terms also have to be rendered into the language - this is not a translation exercise but more an explanation exercise. Again, this is directly derived from observation of what is often required in offices. The oral is made up of a short conversation of a type which might be required in a business context and the writing of a telephone message from a tape of a telephone call between a foreign businessman and an english office-worker.

Perhaps at this point I might mention the Board's Single Subject examinations, which are offered four times a year. These are purely language examinations. They are held in French, German, Italian and Spanish at three stages. Stage I is perhaps a little below 'O' level, Stage II a little above 'O' level, perhaps something for your 1st year 6th-formers to aim at; and Stage III is a little above 'A' level. At Stage III candidates have the opportunity of doing a commercially-biased examination if they want to, which consists of a translation into and out of the language of commercial passages and an exercise to test the candidate's ability to explain precisely in the language. (This could be a formal letter of perhaps an explanation of familiar expressions, or the definition of words and phrases relating to a field of commercial activity). Then they have to write an essay of a more or less general character but bearing on some aspect of industry or commerce and there is also an oral test.

As far as our Single Subject examinations in modern languages are concerned, research is going on at the moment to devise a new series of examinations, the lowest level of which will be a fundamental level examination designed on a communicative basis incorporating general and social language. How the other stages will be changed as a result of this we do not quite know but in the first instance we will certainly retain the examinations we have at present.

I was very glad to hear mention of the role of the bilingual secretary a little earlier on today. It seems to me that very little mention is made in this context of the very important work which a secretary with good language skills can do within an organisation. Our language examinations for secretaries have recently been revised in order to reflect the skills currently required by those aiming to be top secretaries. Although the Certificate for Secretarial Linguists, which is the lower of the two examinations for secretaries, is really designed as a post 'A' level qualification, I shall say one or two words about it because I know that there are quite a number of people in this audience who are involved with counselling students. Working as a bilingual secretary can offer a very well-paid job, as can be seen from the Monday page of "The Guardian" every week, which often includes a number of interesting and well-paid jobs for bilingual secretaries.

The examinations we offer have a very important oral component, especially the telephone test. A great deal of research has been put into this test. I might say that when we first introduced the telephone test into the examination we had quite a few teething problems, in fact one centre actually attempted to carry out the examinations using cans rather than the internal telephone system! Of course. we recommend the latter. The telephone test involves candidates in not only taking a telephone message but also in answering a telephone enquiry requiring the use of standard reference books. In the same oral a sight translation is set. This is a document such as might be required to be translated in an average office - a short 100 word business letter or document. Fluency in conversation is a very important consideration - candidates have to deal with a foreign visitor and talk about their knowledge of the country concerned. I am sure that it is already evident that someone who can do all these things would be invaluable in, for example, an export office. As for the written part of the paper, the whole of it must be typed.

When devising the examinations, it was considered particularly important that a bilingual secretary should know the proper way to lay out a letter in whatever language she was working. So we provide letter-headed paper suitable for letters in each of the four main languages.

We also take great care in the way the question paper is presented, especially with regard to letter layout. As well as translating a letter and typing a reply to a letter the Certificate candiate also has to summarise a passage on a commercial or economic topic and translate a similar article into English.

This is not the place perhaps for a detailed description of the Diploma for Bilingual Secretaries because it is a postgraduate level examination, so your students will not be in a position to take it for a few years yet. I will just mention, though, that the oral test, besides incorporating the same sort of features as the Certificate, also contains a test of liaison interpreting. And the written test contains an exercise in report writing from notes of a meeting. This is designed to test the candidate's ability to organise information, as well as the use of appropriate language, of course.

Besides the examinations that I have briefly described, there are also skills examinations on offer on a Single Subject basis avilable to be taken at any time, whenever the student is ready for them. For instance, French and German audio-typing will be available from 1981. There is also French, German, Italian and Spanish shorthand. As these are offered on a Single Subject basis, they can be useful adjuncts to other examinations in a variety of choices of subjects. Details of these (except for foreign and audio-typewriting examinations details of which are available upon request) are in the Single Subject booklet. I will not attempt at this juncture to answer any technical questions on shorthand or audio-typing.

I hope I have demonstrated that, considered altogether, the RSA examinations fulfil a range of needs for those who hope to enter business or commerce with a knowledge of languages, I might add that the Single Subject examinations are offered on a Mode 3 basis, so that it is possible to have examinations tailored to one's own needs.

We also publish a list of books which have been recommended as being particularly useful for those going into a secretarial career with languages. This appears in the 1980 Language Examinations for Secretaries booklet. We have a Working Party on Foreign Secretarial Practice which takes care to keep up with the current norms which are issued by the various governments on, for example, letter writing, and we have also produced some Notes on Foreign Secretarial Practice. These have been revised recently and the new version is now with the printers. Before I finish, I must emphasise that we are always very grateful to receive constructive criticism of the examinations and we are very willing to discuss the use of the examinations in individual circumstances. Thank you.

Language Examinations in the UK - Mr A Moys, Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT)

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I intend in a very short time to try and fulfil the brief which is an extensive one. I am happy, however, that in particular Mr Phillips will have covered much of the ground that I had intended to cover. I'd like to start by explaining why I'm here and what my credentials are, for speaking on this particular theme. When I joined the staff of CILT as Deputy Director in 1978 I became very quickly involved in two projects, and it is as a result of those projects that I bring certain views to you this morning. The two projects I'll outline to you very quickly: the first is the work of the National Congress on Languages in Education for which CILT provides a Secretariat. The National Congress operates substantially through working parties, one of which has just completed its work for the current cycle of NCLE activity. It set out to study the relationship between what should be taught in the modern languages classroom and what should be examined through public examinations taking account of current practice in both these fields, with particular and specific reference in this cycle to the examinations at 16+. The report of that working party has just gone out, in fact, to the various constituent organisations which are members of the NCLE (and that includes all the major modern language teaching associations in this country). The other project in which I have been engaged and which is also about to appear in print is a publication by CILT called "Modern Language examination at 16+ - a critical analysis". It includes a detailed tabular analysis of all the examinations available in the UK at 16+, all the 'O' level CSE, Scottish 'O' grade and similar examinations, and it is followed by a critical discussion of the form, content and apparent objectives of these examinations. It is on the basis of those two areas of activity, therefore, that I would like to speak to you this morning.

I would like to start by reminding you of what the BOTB report says about this particular issue. It says that "some firms have taken the view that schools for their part should place more emphasis on developing a practical linguistic fluency in their pupils", and it goes on to welcome increasing emphasis being given to the spoken language in 'O' level examinations, and hopes that this can be extended to 'A' level. I wonder whether this welcome is in fact a tacit encouragement to 'O' level boards to improve, or whether perhaps it is a misreading of the real situation. I hope it's the former, because I would not like to start from the basis that all is well in the fields of 'O' level, and that we have in fact only to persuade the examining boards to change 'A' level before the situation would be as we would want it. For example, if we look at the simple question of the enhancement of all skills at 'O' level by our public examination bodies, we find that the mark weightings attached to oral performance at 'O' level vary at the moment from 12% up to a maximum, and it's an isolated maximum, of 35%, with other boards giving 15, 18, 20, in a few cases 25%. I don't therefore accept that by their actions the examining boards at the moment encourage specifically a greater emphasis on oral examination than for example on other skills. Certainly there has been a movement towards the establishment of a greater emphasis, for example the London University Examination Board increased its allocation for oral work recently from 10 to 15%. It's a move in the right direction, but I would not claim at the moment that it has reached the logical point of progression that our discussions this morning would suggest. The other thing that I would like to say is that our modern language examinations at 16+ seem to suffer from almost an ossification of form. We have modern language examinations which still look very much like the modern language examinations of 25 years ago although in fact there have been many moves and substantial improvements in a number of individual cases. We are still stuck with the basic formula of translation

from and into the language: although prose translation has disappeared, as an essential, obligatory requirement for all boards except the Welsh Board it is still available as an option in most boards and is still taken by many candidates in those boards. We still have the preoccupation with translation in both directions;we have reading comprehension activity in which more often than not the testing of reading comprehension is achieved by writing in the foreign languages, which seems to me a confusion of objectives, which has already been pointed out by what Mr Phillips has said this morning. We have still the same forms of written composition we have always had with an emphasis on narrative techniques, on the use of certain tenses, on getting certain 'bonus point' activities into candidates' composition; an emphasis, I would suggest, on spotting the forms of language which are most likely to achieve good marks rather than on language as a means of communicating something which is worth saying. We still have in our examinations tests like dictation, which requires particular emphasis on precision, (an excessive emphasis perhaps) and which is not appropriate to all candidates. In our oral examinations we have tests which I would suggest are masquerading as oral activities. Practically every examination board, for example, requires candidates to read aloud; some boards declare that that particular activity is to assess qualities such as intonation, pronunciation, and expression. We know that in fact reading aloud in any language is more likely to falsify qualities of intonation than it is reveal them, we all know that reading aloud very rarely is achievable satisfactorily in terms of expression, certainly in a foreign language, by candidates at 16+ anyway, and that it only really tests certain mechanical phonetic features of pronunciation, and yet what we would call (if it were English) 'barking at print' is still a common feature not only of examinations but of all of our teaching at 4th and 5th year level as well. We have general conversation in our examination at 16+ which is anything but conversation in most cases. It is in fact generally an encounter between two people who have not met before, trying to talk about topics which the average 16 year old finds rather boring to talk about, such matters as home and relatives, and where he went for his holidays, and so on; most 16 year olds in my experience don't want to talk unless they have something to say. They are less than happy to say it in a foreign language when they understand that the examiner perhaps doesn't really take very much account of what they say, but more of the way in which they say it and whether they happen to say it without making too many mistakes. The fact is that our criteria for the assessment of candidates' oral performance at 16+ are substantially the same as the ones that we apply to assessing written work. There are only a few boards which actually state that they attach importance to whether you get your message across. If we are to have an oral examination then it must have different criteria, I would submit, in its assessment than those which apply in assessing written work. And if we are to have an oral examination let us try and find the right sort of vehicle for such an examination: role play is a good example of an emerging one which enables people to conceal their identity, not to personalise a conversation but take to assumed roles and to see those roles in terms of a real point rather than small talk between two people who don't really have anything to say to each other. And if we do have to pursue the general type of activity between examiner and the examined, why not ask the candidate to interview the examiner to see how much information he can get out of him in 20 minutes about himself? And then mark the candidate on how much information he's managed to obtain in the foreign language. I think it would be a more useful activity ultimately.

A quick look at one or two other features of our examinations as we understand them at the moment: listening comprehension is a welcome new feature of our modern language examinations - I say 'new' in total terms, it's not new in the last couple of years, but in the last 20 years we have seen the progressive advent of listening comprehension to 'O' level and CSE examinations. But listening to what? What is the purpose of listening comprehension? Presumably it was something to do with the spoken language and yet there is not a single examination body, with the exception of Mr Phillips' example which was given to us this morning, which tests listening comprehension with genuine examples of the spoken language. We have more often than not examples of the written language read aloud by an examiner or by a teacher in front of the class with all the density and difference which written language naturally has as compared with spoken language, and candidates are then expected to answer points of specific detail about such comprehension which in my mind are very often quite mind-boggling: they require feats of general intelligence and memory as opposed to linguistic performance. Listening comprehension should surely be listening to natural spoken language with all its redundancies, with its most normal forms apparent; and it should be listening for the same sorts of purposes as people listen to radio broadcasts and other sources of spoken language. As for the writing - I think we still have a heavy emphasis on written skills in our public examinations, we even have a heavy emphasis on written skills in our CSE examination where one would expect the balance between productive and receptive skills, for example, to be swung in favour of receptive skills. But in fact if you take the mark patterns overall you will find that there is very little difference between CSE boards and 'O' level boards in this respect. We still have prose translation, as I have already said - it may not be an obligatory element, it is still 'chosen' for many candidates. We still have guided composition activity characterised by a considerable emphasis on narrative work in which story-telling seems to be the basic form because one suspects story-telling is one of the ways in which you can get people to write in the past tense; whereas there are very many valuable activities which could be written in the present tense but which don't fall into that category.

Now whose responsibility is this? I am not in fact, as you may well be forgiven for thinking, on an examination board-bashing exercise, because in fact I would question whether the responsibility for this position lies entirely with the examination boards. Certainly it lies to an extent with examination boards because they have a responsibility to be fairly conservative, not to bolt off in all new directions as they appear; and certainly I would question whether some examination boards reflect sympathetically enough the views of the teachers whose examinations they provide. But having said that the fact is that we as a profession are conservative; the majority of teachers in surveys that I have been able to conduct seem to prefer the examinations that they have, and by implication the teaching methods that they use at 4th and 5th year level. Now I am aware that probably in a group such as this that would not be the case, but I recently sent a questionnaire to 250 teachers asking for their views on their public examinations and 200 of them replied, the majority of them wanting their examinations to stay as they are. A large minority, and a very vociferous one, was in favour of change, but there is, I suspect, a silent majority of modern language teachers,

who, perhaps for good reasons, are not happy at the prospect of changes that some people are recommending at the moment. And if you want some sort of statistical evidence of this, well there are three examination boards which at 'O' level offer an alternative to the traditional examination. They are JMB, AEB and Oxford. In each case the alternative examination is "somewhat more progressive", I suppose, than the traditional examination but I am aware that those words are value-loaded and therefore I am using them hesitantly. What would you guess to be the relative proportion of entries between the standard examination and the alternative, given that in any particular school where, for example, AEB is being used as an examination presumably the Head of Department has a choice as to whether he used syllabus I or II (and the same of course for Oxford and JMB)? Well, the proportion of school entries is roughly 3:1 in terms of school entries in favour of the traditional examination, at the moment. That is, if you're in a school where the traditional or alternative examinations are available, for reasons which may well be as simple as I'm suggesting, teachers (or Heads of Department?) are preferring to stick with the traditional examination. And so we have a situation where I think we share responsibility for the 16+ examinations that we have at the moment; I hope that many of you will read the CILT critical anaylsis; I know that many of you will disagree with it, but I hope as a result there will be a debate on this issue. I would not like a conference such as this to disperse with the view that all we have to do is something about 'A' level.

I think that Mr Phillips has admirably expressed the shortcomings of our 'A' level examination system, and they are shortcomingsmainly in terms of a shortage of choice. I don't want to get involved in arguments about the relative merits of existing 'A' level arrangements, but I would suggest that they apply to and are designed for only a proportion of our potential 6th form language learners. We do need alternative arrangements which will attract learners to continue foreign language work into the 6th form. I regret to have to observe that I think that the 'AO' formula, which is the one that has had to be adopted by Mr Phillips and others who are trying to improve the situation, is probably not prestigious enough to achieve the motivation among pupils, simply because examinations generally are a matter of status, and the 'AO' is so often written off unwisely by people as being only an 'O' level equivalent, and therefore they won't do it. The development of the proposals for an 'I' level examination (or whatever we are going to call it), I think are encouraging and I would certainly endorse what Mr Phillips said about the loss of numbers reflected in those figures which you can find in Schools Council Working Paper No. 28, figures relating to the number of candidates who used to choose to do subsidiary level languages in the 6th form when a subsidiary level was available. They did not start doing 'A' levels when the subsidiary course was removed; they simply gave up doing foreign languages.

If you think that I have insisted rather too much on the cruciality of examinations in terms of what we teach in schools, I would, I think, here put in a plea for teachers. Teachers have a responsibility not simply to their view of the curriculum as it changes or their own specialist subject, but also responsibilities to their children and the parents; they want to get them through examinations. There is wide-spread and powerful evidence to suggest that there is a backwash effect in terms of examination influence on teaching. Part of the NCLE Working Party 'A' Report reveals the results of a survey of 104 different classes

observed at 4th year level last year in which the examination requirements were related to the teaching activities, and there was a very close mirror image effect. Modern language teachers generally at 4th and 5th year level are in fact not only teaching to the examination but use the examination tests as the mechanism for teaching as well. Therefore much will depend on the leadership that examination boards give, with the help of teachers, in making sure that the best practice or the most appropriate practice is reflected in the backwash effect. I think therefore that what is needed is examinations that reflect first the needs of communications and increasing performance skills, with a parallel reduction of English in the classroom. I have found that English is not so apparent in years 1 and 2 at secondary school but increases progressively as you move up through the school. I think that we should aim for a satisfying experience of language learning at the age of 16 in the sense that some sort of positive achievement is identified if pupils give up at that point. A sense of positive achievement is difficult where there is an excessive preoccupation with error, which I think is so much a feature of our language teaching in this country. We need to get more pupils to 16 in languages, and beyond 16 we need to get more continuing to study foreign languages as a support to other disciplines towards 'A' level.

I think it is perhaps inappropriate to consider the direct vocational application of languages at school to languages in work and industry. I think, for example, that the average employer doesn't identify the needs that he has of an employee until that employee has been with him for some time. The need very often doesn't emerge until you're around 30, with maybe a post of responsibility which may well take you abroad. One could hardly expect schools to make provision for that sort of requirement. Nor can one anticipate the language need in terms of German, Dutch, Swahili or what have you; schools certainly couldn't meet those needs. I think what schools can do, however, is to provide a rewarding experience, language learning with if nothing else, some sort of residual positive view of language as opposed to the one that is socially acceptable in our society, "Oh, I was never good at languages at school". What that statement really means is "I was never good at the sort of languages I was taught at school", and secondly I think we need to break free from the continuing, and I think still present yoke of classical tradition in our language learning with its preoccupation with precision above all other things. Thank you Mr Chairman.

AF We have a very dedicated speaker, Mr Cross, who is in charge of modern languages at a quite difficult London comprehensive school in the Elephant and Castle area with 40% immigrant pupils. He's got some interesting ideas and interesting views of how to proceed in these circumstances. Interestingly, he came to teaching (although he'd been a linguist for a long time) only in his mid-30s.

Innovations in Modern Language learning in the 11-16 age group - Mr D Cross

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I must start by saying that I am speaking for myself and my ideas would certainly be seen as scatty by some teachers, perhaps by one or two HMIs as well! However, I would like to give you my scheme and perhaps explain why I found it necessary to change what I found when I went into language teaching. Having spent ten years as a tour manager using languages and learning languages (I had a boss who would send me to a country and say 'Look, you've got 10 days in which to learn the language'. He really meant it, he didn't mean the grammar, but to be able to say something) I was stunned to find that the children after 5 years and 30,000 minutes were totally unable to satisfy even the most basic needs. I just couldn't believe that they had spent so much time for so little in end results. Remember too that I am thinking about the few who actually carried on for five years. The attitudes too were poor. I was horrified, and I thought "I just can't do this for the rest of my life, I've got human dignity, it's got to be better than this sometime", so I immediately started to re-think the aims, the method, the content. What was it valid to give pupils like this? and what was not valid? I considered too the pattern in which the language was imparted to them. This seemed to me equally worthy of questioning because while linguists question methods, and effect changes in this domain, they have failed to query the pattern of five years, five lessons a week. Having re-thought the pattern and the contents this in turn influenced my methods because you can't pretend to be teaching a communicative syllabus if you're not teaching in a communicative way, so, the method had to be changed as well. Basically my changes, which you will see later on, had to some extent the effect of giving us less time on the main languages of the school, which resulted in an increase of pace for teachers and for pupils. I've found over some years now that everybody is quite capable of meeting the demands of a much higher pace.

So our first question is, "What are the needs of the pupils?" It's really impossible to say, isn't it? We don't know if the child is ever going to need a language at all. We don't know if industry is going to need Arabic, Chinese, French, Greek - we have no idea, we can't predict. We can't even predict the areas of interaction in which he may find himself in the languages which we do teach him and which he may come to use eventually. Prediction, then, is totally impossible, but I think we can morally and educationally make quite a lot of assumptions, and I put some on the overhead transparency mainly to wake up the people who are going to doze off.

TRANSPARENCY A

NEEDS-FOR ALL

1. Some degree of competence in several languages
2. Ability to learn subsequent languages efficiently

POST-OPTION NEEDS

FLUENCY	(a)	Listening	- radio and speech
	(b)	Reading	- newspapers and letters
	(c)	Speaking	- natural speech forms

I think that some degree of competence, not just in French or German, but in several languages, is very worthy; and I say some degree of competence. I don't mean an ability to describe the grammar of the languages as I can Hungarian, (but in which I couldn't get myself a Martini with any degree of confidence). I'm talking about performance and I think this is moral both for leisure, which all of them will have in far greater measure than any of us have ever known in the past, and for business use. Sir Adrian spoke this morning of being in Japan illiterate as well as unable to say anything. I've had this feeling as well in other countries - Yugoslavia for example and it is a dreadful feeling. The ability even to say 'hallo' and 'thank you' makes an enormous difference. I'm not proposing just that trite level of 'hallo' and 'thank you' but a level of functioning competence, and, I think far more important the ability to learn subsequent languages. We should be imparting to the pupil a willingness to learn a foreign language, a confidence to learn a foreign language and favourable attitudes towards subsequent foreign language learning, so that even if he doesn't himself learn, he can pass on a favourable attitude towards his own child who is our next pupil. We must give the child insight into the nature and functions of language.

TRANSPARENCY B

OBVIOUS PATTERN

1. Successive Compact Courses - increasing intensity
2. Common Syllabus - made explicit to learner
3. Linguistics - parallel to Foreign Language study

I think an obvious pattern comes from that, and the pattern would be one of successive compact courses. That's the latest label for what some people would call 'taster courses' but there is a difference: a compact course could be anything from 20 hours to 50 hours to 100 hours, it could be done in one weekend, it could be done over an academic year. There's no set pattern. The definition of a compact course is that it is totally self-contained with an end objective and an end surrender value; so if the learner takes only that one compact course and stops he has completed a course. It isn't part 1 of 5 compact courses leading to an 'O' level; it's clearly defined and is an end in itself, with real surrender value. It's up to you to define a compact course that will fit into your programme in your school.

I suggest, too, that the courses should increase in intensity as the child gets older. A child of 11 doesn't learn as efficiently as a child of 16, we know that. It may be, too, that 5 lessons a week at 11 is not necessary; it may even be harmful! I personally think that a double period a week in the 1st year is enough but it could be two doubles. I think too that successive compact courses should share a common syllabus - obviously a compact course in year 2 goes a little further than a compact course in year 1 because the child has learned learning strategies, and is intellectually better-equipped. Your syllabus will have to go a little further, but it will be the same syllabus so what he's done in the first language he will now do in the second language and the syllabus will be explained to the pupil. The reason for making it explicit is that the learner should eventually learn to define his own needs. He should be able to approach the learning of a new language and say 'I will need to be able to do this with the new language - I will need to be able to apologise to somebody I will need to be able to introduce myself to somebody, to interact in a restaurant/hotel/travel situation', and he will be able to define his own areas of interaction and his own needs both structurally and lexically.

I suspect that few language teachers do make the syllabus explicit to the learner. I suspect that many schools have no departmental syllabus for the first year or second year or for any language group. Yet this is the most vital thing of all because if you haven't got a syllabus, how do you know where you're going?!

Additionally I think that there must be some linguistics. The topic came up this morning; language awareness, the ability to learn a language subsequently has got to be taught and possibly as an exam subject. We must consider the role of linguistics far more deeply than we have done before. The reason being, of course, that a good driver knows what's going on underneath the bonnet, and I think any good linguist should know roughly what he's doing with the language. Our children are not aware enough of their own mother tongue; they don't understand the functions of English; they don't understand the complexity of English and it is complex - despite its grammatical simplicity there's an awful amount of irregularity in English; and children should be made to think about this, should perhaps even just feel sympathy for the foreigner who is struggling and making mistakes with English. Eventually when they come to use English with foreigners, and let's face it they will do, at least they'll have some patience with the chap who's struggling to use their language with all of its complexity. They will too be more tolerant of the complexities of French, Spanish and German. I think, too, linguistics can give them an awareness of features of other languages. Latin used to do it to some extent; French possibly does it now as it is presently taught, and this may be the sole justification for French to 'O' level in five years, that it is doing what Latin used to do, it is possibly giving them an awareness of contrasting features and concepts which don't exist in English. But I don't think you need to suffer five years' French to acquire such concepts. It can be done through the medium of the Mother Tongue and it should be done separately, not as part of a language course. If you're teaching a language you teach language with a defined syllabus but you teach about language in English. Children can be brought to consider concepts such as gender; adjectival agreements, tense, person in the verb; but this can best be done in their own linguistics unit. I think, too that they should consider features of exotic languages which they might meet later on - that the first person plural 'we' can be 'me and somebody with me', it can be 'me and my wife, who's not in this room', and it can also be the collective 'we' of 'us and my wife who's not here'. There are so many different 'we's' between which other languages will distinguish.

To summarise, we must be aiming for the first three years to fit the children to self-learn or to be taught languages subsequently with insight, understanding, and confidence. I believe this has got to be the aim for 100% of them so that those that give up can at least give up able to do certain things in several languages and hence feel a certain amount of confidence.

The 'ongoers' are a different kettle of fish altogether. At the moment I think there are about 30-40% who go on nationally and the most important thing that they must bring to us is motivation. If they're not motivated they really shouldn't go on because if a child is motivated, you can do anything with him. Ongoers' needs are different because having chosen to go on, they can be taken beyond the more concrete level, the more rote-learning level, into the levels of abstraction. But what do these ongoers need most from us? I suggest that above all they need fluency, and the distinction is being made here between fluency and accuracy. I mean fluency of listening, the ability to listen to a radio and get the message. You can call it 'gist listening', but I liketo call it fluent listening. You're not listening for items, you're listening for message. I think they need to read fluently - to approach newspapers and letters with a degree of confidence - again reading for information, not looking at every word and wondering if it's the subjunctive or the present tense! Of course they need

to speak; I believe that they need to speak using natural speech forms, in other words, not the artificial written forms that most people teach in their classroom. They have to realise there's a difference between 'j(e) sais pas' and 'je ne sais pas', which only English people say. There are just two or three questions I'd like to consider. Do they really need to write? If so, what? My wife is one of these famous bilingual secretaries at the French Embassy. She is French, but if she writes a letter in English it immediately goes to an English secretary to be checked, and if necessary re-written. Secondly what percentage of the population has the very ability to go on to abstract levels of use in the school situation? I'm not talking about a natural situation where they will acquire it, but of a formal, learning situation. I wonder too, how many possess the necessary motivation for a longer course of study?

If language should become compulsory for all could we look at an idea which is not mine but which was suggested at the JCLA, and was subsequently developed by Harry Ree in a recent article in the Times Educational Supplement - would not several levels be more valid for many of the children we teach than a five year attack upon one single language? They would study the common syllabus across three languages rather than try and take one to the level of abstraction. You all know the problems: the minute you want them to transpose 'je suis allé, il est allé,' they get lost. Is it really necessary to put them through that, all of them? I don't think so. Certainly we mustn't deprive those of them that want it, need it, and are able to benefit from it, but I think it's an impossible hoop for many and I think we've got to be honest. At level I there's a great amount or rote-learning, of concrete language use. Almost all of them are capable of that. I was sorry to hear that an H.M.I. had dismissed Harry Ree's scheme as "hare-brained". If the chap who said it really wants to come into my school and try teaching five years'French to some of my nasty thickies, he's welcome! I'm not a bad teacher, but I would never claim to be able to survive - let alone teach effectively - a five year course for 100% of the school population.

Isn't it a great pity that we don't reward - we spend all this time trying to teach them inaccurate French, inaccurate German,-the child who already speaks Greek, Turkish, Urdu, Bengali, Polish, Hungarian? We've got thousands of them here and we don't do anything to give them certificates. I hope employers are sufficiently wide awake to take in these people without a certificate! We still insist on teaching that poor little Cypriot anglicised French! He speaks Greek fluently already!

There is a pattern which has evolved from this. It is my own, but it does seem to work where I am. I'm not trying to suggest that if you're teaching in the Yorkshire Dales or Derbyshire you have need of a pattern like this; it may well be that your children lap up five years' French or German, in which case please keep giving it to them. They don't lap it up in the London area, and this is the schedule I've evolved which seems to work remarkably well.

TRANSPARENCY C

AN ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE

Year I	Foreign language 1 + Linguistics + Background Studies
Year II	Foreign language 2 + Linguistics + Background Studies
Year III	Foreign language 3. Fast. Extra Time.

OPTIONS

Years IV and V	Foreign Language 3 continued. Foreign Language 2 or 1 resumed.
Years VI and VII	Higher Examinations + AB Initio Programmes

In the first year they have a first foreign language to a clearly-defined transactional level, and a consecutive language study course in which they just consider language; what it is, its role in cognition (although we don't call it cognition); language deprivation, how it can affect deprived children, or institutionalised children. They find it fascinating because language is fascinating! - Without it we'd be brutes. In the second year they do exactly the same syllabus but with a second foreign language. In the third year they study more intensively a third foreign language. Some people might ask what the first language is and what the second language is. - It doesn't matter! If I employed someone next year who speaks Japanese it would be Japanese. A friend, a former student of mine, teaches to our pattern. His Foreign Language 1 is in fact Cantonese because his children spend more time in Chinese take-aways than in Boulogne! There's nothing sacred about Foreign Language 1, or Foreign Language 2. This year, as it happens, I'm doing Foreign Language 1, Foreign Language 2 and Foreign Language 1 again in year 2 as a sort of booster course. Of course, administrators have problems writing timetables, and it is a problem, I know, but they mustn't let it spoil our lives. The fact is that you can put your Foreign Language 1 teachers in with your first years while the other chap is doing his Foreign Language 2 with the second years; then they can swop over, so one lot will do Spanish in the first year and another will do German. It doesn't matter. Then they'll do the other in the second year. I think though that each language course should be accompanied by linguistics. It's a great pity that many graduates coming up haven't done any linguistics. This is a great shame and something which should be remedied. In the third year I increase the exposure because I've adopted the pattern of a double lesson a week for the first two years and then three double lessons a week in year 3. What I'd like to do now, having followed my model for some years, is to have a double in the first year, two doubles in year 2 and three doubles in year 3. But as it is now it still works well. In the third year we drop all background work and just smash the main language, which is French. We really hit French hard. Remember that they come to us having tasted several languages to the level of success, they come too with linguistic insight, most of them know that the first person singular imperfect tense is 'I was' and that the first person plural imperfect tense is 'we was' (sic). They know what a gender system is. I don't get somebody putting up a hand and saying "Sir, why do they say ..." etc, I don't get it because they've done all that and got it out of the way. We don't have to waste any time; we've done all the frills. Having included European Studies modules in the set-up we don't need to talk about croissants and the Eiffel Tower. We've done it all. We just teach French hard. Initially we go through the same syllabus as we did in the earlier languages and then we crash through it and into the real world. Within four months of beginning French they are listening to the radio, reading newspaper cuttings, talking of their own past and future activities. Yes, within four months of starting French! It sounds impossible but they can do it, and they're London kids - pupils can do it and they will do it if you keep the pace up.

Then of course we come to options. And thank God; because by the time they come to the end of the third year some of them are really beginning to get awkward or lost. They know that 'je suis allé' and 'il est allé' is not for them, and they begin to show it. We cope with this at the end of the third year by anticipating the option groups by about May and offering retrieval courses in Foreign Language 1 and Foreign Language 2. So the way is open to keep the droppers going to the end of the year with a certificate for achievement. We award and print our own certificates for our own tests. They can all take the certificates in French on the work they've done in the third year. Pupils abandoning French can work for certificates in earlier languages. People who are carrying on, though, can carry on with French through the final term. In the fourth year they can pick up German again. I've got a teacher who could teach Spanish but because of the

timetable we cannot offer it. The only way we could fit Spanish in would be to cadge time from an other subject. We've got all the teaching periods that we can handle and the only way I can increase my department is by decreasing somebody else's. They're reluctant, so my timetable is not ideal. In the 6th form we do continue to higher examinations although we're not an academic school by any means. Additionally we offer ab-initio programmes in Italian and German. This is done in one year to 'O' level or CSE because older pupils can learn so much more efficiently.

The benefits of my programme are this. I think that we give a real preparation for subsequent language learning. Pupils acquire an ability to cope at an elementary transactional level in at least three languages. They've got a chance to take one or more languages to a higher level and problems of teacher and pupil movement are minimised. If I haven't got an Italian teacher I can use a Polish teacher: it doesn't matter. We find that the children we teach are every bit as good as those we previously taught for five years. I can do in one year with them what I used to do in three. So we don't handicap the child going on to the 4th and 5th years. He is just as strong linguistically in every single sense and he's more highly motivated. I see five years' French as the enemy of language education. I think it creates harmful attitudes. Children can end up (and I've noticed this in different schools), detesting the French people, French culture; unwilling to learn Italian, Spanish, conviced that they can't. I think it has a disastrous effect on the syllabus; in most schools the syllabus for Year 1 is one fifth of the 'O' level course, so they do adjectival agreements and the present tense in Year 1. I suspect that improvements are held back by the present system of examining. Future parents leave school perceiving themselves as language failures. I was going to talk about public examinations but Alan Moys has stolen most of my thunder. I'm sure that 'O' level is largely correlated with IQ. The examiners seem to be totally unaware of examining and singularly untrained in language testing. They also seem unaware of the uses to which foreign languages will be put. The backwash, which has been described already, is atrocious. Teachers insist on dissertations, on writing essays, on dreadfully difficult and horrendous tests of memory, on doing reading comprehension on written tests which are totally free of any context; they talk in English about the language; in fact most language teachers in schools I've been to stick posters over the window so that nobody can actually watch them teaching.

What does language teaching need? I suggest that we need trained examiners, an enlightened body of people to create measures of communicative competence. Perhaps too we should look carefully at the sections bilingues, for which I have the utmost admiration.

Am I optimistic or pessimistic? Reasonably optimistic. I heard an H.M.I. discussing language teaching in the 1980's who suggested that the time had come to experiment with courses of different lengths and of different intensities. There is too a growing interest in linguistics as an adjunct to language teaching. There is international interest in the notion of compact courses. Teachers themselves are questioning the value of the traditional long-term course and developing their own threshold tests; the tests themselves are having beneficial effects upon teaching. Finally I am cheered by the growing interest in industry - which is what brings us all here together today.

AF And now may I call upon Mr Downes who is going to talk to us about resource implications in school language studies. Mr Downes is now Headmaster of the Henry Box School at Witney, which is a mixed comprehensive school of 11-18 year olds. He was formerly Senior French Master at Manchester Grammar School and Head of Linguistic Studies at Banbury School, being the author and editor of certain French and German text books for schools and he was formerly Secretary of the British Association for Language Teaching. Mr Downes .....

School Language Studies - Mr P Downes

Thank you very much. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. In the weeks that have passed since I was summoned to this conference and given the opportunity of speaking to you, I have been reading the background reports and papers that have lead up to today, and I have been conscious of a sense of guilt, failure and inadequacy as a modern languages teacher. It is a rather Kafkaesque nightmare; somebody - I am not quite sure who-seems to be accusing me of having failed in what I was trying to do. Roughly speaking, the charge in my nightmare goes like this: the linguistic development of young people has been entrusted to you and you have failed in that task. The evidence is that you have taught avoir and être and adjectival agreements and re and ir verbs and 65% of them didn't want to know any more and dropped out in the third year. You then went on to teach the perfect tense and preceding direct object agreement and a further 18 or so per cent dropped out at the end of the fifth year. You then got about 7% in the sixth form and you taught them about Racine and Voltaire and most of those dropped out after that. Those who went on to university studied Racine in even greater depth and as a result British industry cannot sell its products to Europe. How do you plead? Guilty or Not Guilty? And I would say "Guilty M'Lord", but I would plead for clemency on the grounds of diminished responsibility and mitigating circumstances. I am guilty, sir, in that I would recognise that modern language teachers have possibly been slow to recognise the need for change. When we were overtaken by the change to comprehensive education and the expansion of modern language teaching right across the ability range, I think perhaps many of us wrongly thought it was just a question of teaching the same things rather more slowly. We have been slow to redefine our objectives and we were mistaken too in that we put perhaps too much trust in the technological revolution and in audio-visual aids. We thought perhaps naively in those days that this was the answer. So I would say that we have a lot to blame ourselves for.

But there are mitigating circumstances. I think that the English insularity which has been referred to already is a very serious problem for us. It is difficult to motivate people who are a long way from the coast, who are a long way from foreigners and the unfortunate thing is that our national figures, the cream of our society and the leaders of our society do not exactly set a good example by the kind of foreign language they talk. Changes in society and general schools methodology have, in my view, made modern languages rather more unpopular than they were because the unfortunate fact is that, if you are going to learn a modern language, you actually have to work hard, you have to learn, you have to be able to remember. Society as a whole has got rather sloppy and as a reflection of that in schools we have become easier in the general demands that we have made on pupils. I think this is one of the reasons why modern languages are not so popular precisely because they are demanding. And I would also plead as a mitigating circumstance, and I don't need to expand upon this because it has already been referred to, the inertia of the English examining system. The 'O' level examination is designed to intensify a sense of failure even among those who actually succeed. How often do you hear: I can't talk French, I only got 'O' level. The assumption on which the examiners work is that the candidate will actually write accurate French, that is the starting line. After 500 hours of French study, they will be penalised for the mistakes that they make from the assumption of perfection. Our colleagues in the English department do not have the same approach and their pupils have been learning English for 71,540 hours by the time that they take their English 'O' level, but they are not penalised in the same narrow, critical

way as are people who are taking French. I quote from the general report for Oxford Local Examinations and the chief examiner reports with horror that a large number of candidates spelt une porte pourrie without an 'e' on the end of the word pourrie. What they were writing about rotten doors for, goodness only knows. The fourth mitigating circumstance that I would plead is the very structure of the examining system whereby students are divided into sheep or goats. They either do languages to become some sort of specialist or do not do them at all. Well now what can we do about it? We would take the criticisms, we recognise their validity. I hope that, although there aren't many industrialists in the audience today the message will get back. What are we going to do about it? Just before I make some very practical suggestions I want to make one important caveat and that is that, in my view, schools do not primarily exist to prepare young people for industry. I want to say that not because I am unappreciative of the efforts that have been made by industry - I have spent the last 48 hours being told by industrialists of various kinds in various bodies what we ought to be doing. I am not in any sense ungrateful nor wish to be cynical about the relationship between industry and schools but I would like to suggest that schools are above all places of education where we seek to develop a whole range of skills and talents, but we do of course try to impart the knowledge which is necessary for life in a technological society. They are places where we are setting standards of personal discipline and hard work and we are developing in our pupils the ability to live and to work with others and if we do that properly we will I think be in a position to pass on to industry young people for which industry will thank us and will build on the foundations we have laid. If we were to fail in those objectives, however well they know French, Chinese, Maths or whatever, then it would not be doing industry a very great service. Having said that we must recognise that in schools we must do our very best of course to collaborate with society as a whole, in producing, broadly speaking, the kind of young people that we need. And I want to come now to some very practical suggestions about resources and implications on schools for resources. The three resources that we have got are our time, our money and our teachers. Our time: do enthusiastic reformers realise the pressure that there is on the curriculum in a school today? We are told of course that English and Maths are basic and they must be protected. Today's world requires everybody to be familiar with science and technology. We are reminded of our responsibilities in connection with moral and health education. We are being urged to include "political awareness" in the curriculum. We know, of course, that 10% of the time ought to be spent in physical education and we know too now that our task is to prepare children for leisure. Now all those things put together meant that the curriculum is grossly overloaded and if we are going to be expected to create more time for modern languages then I think we are chasing something that we will never achieve. What we have got to do is to work within the time allowance that we have got because we simply cannot cram any more things in. Then there are the problems of money: these are very great indeed and I would like to point out one thing which people are not directly concerned with the overall running and financing of schools may not quite be aware of: that is that not only are we not getting as much money to run our schools, but the building programme for schools is now slowing down with the result that we are not getting the input of new materials, new equipment, new furniture that we had, say, in the late sixties, early seventies and schools are having to repair and make do and patch up out of their own limited allocations of money. There are serious financial problems and I shall be coming back to these when I come to make some practical suggestions in a moment.

So. money is very very difficult indeed. Of course, as far as teachers are concerned it would be very nice to be able to say well we need to give more time to modern language teaching, smaller groups, more initimate face-to-face contact and so on - a splendid idea; but where are we actually going to find the teachers? People who are not in education (and in fact nearly everybody in the room is but perhaps the industrialists would appreciate this point) read in the papers about "cuts in teachers" and they see it as a figure - it's 2% here, it's 5% there, it's 10% there - what does it actually mean? I want to give you just one example from my own school. I took over as Headmaster of Henry Box School five years ago with a school of just over 1,000 - 1040 - and 58.9 teachers. I now find myself five years on with a school of just under 1,000 - 977 - which you will realise is virtually the same size of school as far as teaching is concerned and in September I will be staffing the school with 50.9. teachers. So in five years I have lost eight teachers that are allocated to me. Now that is a very serious business. It is all very well saying that we will have to "make do", but how do you actually do it? In this present year I have been reduced to having an assembly period for the first and second years (360 pupils) which I take myself and do a solo for the whole period simply in order to save 11 "teaching periods". And that is how tight it is. And I want people who are not directly connected with education to know in practical terms what the problems are in terms of resources. Nevertheless, certain things can be done and have to be done ..... Firstly by people in schools: we must rethink our objectives and our methodology. Changes are taking place, you have seen a few minutes ago an example from David Cross of a very interesting different approach. I personally wouldn't go quite all that way along the line with him but I would share a lot of his ideas and intentions. You will have heard and read about the graded examinations approach in Oxfordshire and Yorkshire (and in various other areas now) and the importance of that approach is not so much that it will solve the disciplinary problems that we used to face with less able pupils who hated French by the end of the second year and wanted to drop and were given a new purpose; a new sense of fun and enjoyment, the important thing about the experiment is that it has taught us to look positively at modern language teaching and not negatively. It has taught us to set objectives and work to those and I believe that in the long run that is going to have a very positive effect. I would support what David Cross has said in that linguistics or teaching about language must be part of our course. I think that there is an important passage on page 13 of the BOTB report: "While a practical foreign language comptence is an essential objective, the importance is also recognised of developing the capacity to learn a language which will enable individuals later on to maintain or to add to the languages learnt at school as and when the need arises". That is a crucial point and that is why I would not want to reduce my language teaching in my own school simply to surviving in Hungarian and surviving in Japanese and surviving in French and in everyday tourist situations, I want also to teach language more sequentially so that you can get over to pupils experience of how language works. So I think a lot can be done in school but it is a painful business and we have to recognise that a lot of us are so lethargic. References by Alan Moys ealier today indicated that the majority of language teachers really want to go on as they are because basically it saves having to think. We have to recognise that and support and guide our colleagues to see whether or not we are doing the right things. Secondly, I think careers advisors have got a very big responsibility to play in this whole area; I would like them to try to make young people choosing their subjects and their jobs be aware of the need to keep up their language at whatever level: it may be for an AO examination, it may eventually be intermediate,

or whatever, but to keep up the language; and also to be honest in pointing out to those who do languages as a specialist subject that they may have to be prepared to re-train later on in order to get their technical competence. Thirdly I would want the examining boards to revise their syllabuses entirely so that they are relevant to the majority of pupils taking them and not to the minority who will go on beyond that particular hurdle to take the subject afterwards. If you work it all out, a lot of difficulties stem from the assumption that everybody is actually going to read French at Oxford. If you work all the way back down the chain of cause and effect the things that we are doing in the lower school are conditioned by that long term assumption and I would like to see examinations re-thought from the point of view of their relevance and usefulness to the people who are taking them - the majority of people and not just the minority who are going to go on to take something else afterwards. We have been knocking the examination boards very hard today but let us remind ourselves that the examination boards are open to influence from teachers and there are teachers on the panels and on the advisory committees and it is up to those of us who feel strongly about this to find out who are our representatives on these panels, and to ask them what they really believe about the purpose of examinations. Ask whether or not they are putting pressure on the Boards or are they simply turning up for a nice day from time to time and a chat about the pictures on page 5 of last year's examination. Fourthly I would want from the DES more central direction and I would like to hear them recommend something explicit and precise and say that it is a good idea for all pupils to take a modern language up to 16: it might be in the David Cross pattern or it might be in a conventional pattern, but it should be part of the full curriculum, not only to 16 but up to 18 and to revise the examination system so that this could be achieved. Fifthly I would want the broadcasting authorities, (I don't think there are many of them here but somebody might know somebody of influence in high places) to give more air time to foreign language broadcasts. We have got a marvellous opportunity there, and what do we get? For about six weeks we get an extract of the French news at twenty past eleven on BBC2. Now, I ask you, how many people, even dedicated members of staff, are going to stay up till 11.20 (unless they are marking of course) to watch that and as for pupils .....?! How marvellous it would be if you had as a regular early evening slot five minutes or ten minutes of the French or the German or Russian news. It is technically relatively easy. It is perfectly possible to transfer these broadcasts around with or without satellite. It would make a fantastic difference to see people actually using a language for passing on information. Finally to industry. How could industry help schools? I believe that industry has got a tremendous job of education to do among its own members, to try to get over to them the importance of foreign languages and to get them to make it clear in advertisements and in all communications with potential employees that languages as an ancillary skill are essential. I would want them to encourage and to help in practical ways. We heard earlier today of the splendid effect of the BP sponsorship of that project which has turned into the A0 French and German for Business Studies. Now I admit it is easy for BP: if you have made a profit of £1,600 million in the last twelve months you won't miss a few thousand. But I am sure that even medium-sized industry could find it possible to undertake the sponsorship of projects and of teacher secondments. And what about the sponsorship of travel abroad? Travel abroad either for teachers or for pupils is a very difficult and expensive business but a small subsidy, a small grant by a local industry to a local school - I am talking of something at a very mundane level, not a grandiose national scheme, but locally based - would make a fantastic difference. With two or three hundred pounds it would mean you could take

a lot of your pupils to France or to Germany whereas at the moment it is very difficult and people are scratching about. What about undertaking greater sponsorship of foreign assistants in our schools? In many of the areas some of the cuts have hit the foreign assistants and so the one living embodiment of the foreign country in a school has disappeared or is disappearing. Now we know that industry can't buy us teachers, it's not possible to do that with any degree of long-term certainty but I wonder if you couldn't sponsor foreign assistants as one way of making a direct contribution. And if you get an opportunity to make a direct donation to schools in terms of equipment or text books although the sum involved to you may be small (it may be £500 which if claimed for tax purposes as a business expense is absolutely minimal), it is virtually equivalent of what a department may have to spend on the whole of its modern languages in one particular year. So to go to your local school and say: Can we equip every modern languages classroom in your school with a very good cassette playback machine? Although it is only a relatively small thing for industry dealing in millions, to the school receiving it it would be absolutely fantastic and what a boost to the pupils to see that industry really meant what it said and was prepared to back that up with a little bit of practical help. At the very least give us a book prize for £10 for the best French speaker or German speaker in the school. Try to think of something that will actually show that, if the British Overseas Trade Board really means all this then they are prepared to back it up.

In conclusion then I belive that all of us have the responsibility in our ordinary capacity as human beings in society, to work to change the climate of opinion about modern languages and about the speaking and understanding of a foreign language. In this country we still believe that it is rather odd to be able to speak or understand a foreign language. It is an exception rather than a rule and that is something we have got to work at changing. Last weekend I was very much involved in the twinning of Witney and Le Touquet, and the Mayor came over from Le Touquet and there was the usual business of speeches and presentations. I was asked if I would do the interpreting for the Mayor of Witney who couldn't speak French. I did so knowing full well that out of the 14 French visitors who were in the delegation from Le Touquet at least 12 could understand the Mayor of Witney when he spoke in English. I was then asked to interpret into English for the French Mayor who did speak in French, (I suppose there was some minor consolation in that he did actually speak in French) but at the end of his speech he had taken the trouble to learn a paragraph in English and he finished by passing on his greetings to the people of Witney in English. And that to me sums up the difference between our two countries: one was prepared to make the effort whereas the other one had said in effect that they will either understand my language or I will call in a specialist to translate it. That is the attitude towards languages which we have all got to work together to change.

AF Thank you very much indeed Mr Downes. The time has now come for us to have our panel discussion. I don't need to introduce the members of my platform party because I think you have heard them all except Professor Ager of the University of Aston and Professor Nigel Reeves who is head of the Department of Linguistic and International Studies of the University of Surrey. Professor Reeves was also a member of the BOTB Study Group.

Roger David, Modern Languages Adviser for Dudley

I think what has emerged if I have understood what has been said is that schools are being asked to put a much greater emphasis on valuable communicative oral skills and that is just as difficult to achieve as the, if you like, traditional narrowly descriptive approach was in the past and perhaps I should say that I thoroughly applaud such a move. However, I would suggest that this needs to be examined not just in the context of languages for industry, languages for examinations and language teaching in schools, but in the broad sense of the curriculum. Now, in a sense if we ask modern languages teachers and the examining boards, to respond to this very practical lead, what it means is that pupils will be asked to do something quite different just for modern languages. In other systems, for example, in Europe the German system, as a whole the educational system is very much orally based. It demands constant interchange, constructive interaction between teacher and pupil and that starts at the age of six. In our country there is a complete contrast; everything you can say is motivated by written performance. We know, too, I think from the very valuable recent HMI secondary survey that in the 5th and 6th form most of the time is spent in note-taking, or essay writing or examination preparation. But even further down, in many primary schools, 50% of the time is spent passively with pupils writing answers to so-called comprehension questions, perhaps even pseudo-comprehension questions. That brings then to my mind that the British pupil at say the age of 14 and 15, has not had his oral skills in general developed to anything like the extent that his Continental counterparts have. Now whereas it is quite possible - and anybody, for example, who was taught in Germany could confirm this - that if in a German class one speaks for about 20 minutes not only would they be able to remember it in a foreign language, but be able to give a summary of what you said and critical responses. Many pupils cannot do that in English, in their own language, because our general system is against it. So the point that I'm making is that whereas this is absolutely admirable, - I'd be a 100% behind it - I really think that we should tackle this in the terms of the general curriculum. We need to get a general consensus that oral skills play a very valuable part in education and are not to be dismissed and are going to be vital in future life: I believe in the USA now that all but 28% of the working population is engaged in communicative arts in their work. Unless you can tackle this on a general curriculum basis I think that in effect we might be making quite grotesquely unequal demands upon students and pupils of modern language.

AF Thank you. I'll ask Mr Downes who is really the Headmaster on our platform whether he would like to comment.

PD I would agree that this is an important point. One of the significant aspects of course work is the training in the ability to understand the oral/aural aspect; without specific training in this I agree that the UK child is at a disadvantage.

Mrs J Lyon, Notre Dame High School, St Helens

This question leads on directly from the previous speaker. I would like to ask Mr Cross whether he would involve members of the English department in the general language and linguistic teaching that take place in the first and second year?

DC My department already influences the general language work done during the first year, so English teachers involved in the first year consortium teaching are meeting and using materials provided by us; materials of a linguistic nature. These same teachers also teach an elementary course of foreign language to the youngsters. My own role in the school is to be extended to that of Language - Co-ordinator. This will enable me to make the bridge between all departments in the Humanities Faculty and to produce an agreed language policy for the whole school. I agree with the inference, the present rift between teachers of English and teachers of Modern Languages is unfortunate and largely unnecessary.

Mrs R E Woodhouse, Kidderminster College of Further Education, Worcestershire

Two points, the first very quickly. I've acted as an interpreter for the twinning delegation from Germany and I've gone to Germany with our delegation and acted as an interpreter there, so why not extend that back up by industry to the industry of the twin town? Why not ask one of their firms to sponsor someone coming over here as an assistant? That's my first idea The second idea is completely different; we've heard about the new examinations which are much more contemporary and business-minded, and I am quite worried about the fact that I haven't met many graduates from universities here who would actually be capable, at this moment, of teaching commercial French, Business German, Business Spanish, etc. I am all in favour of making examinations more contemporary and more business-like and serving industry to a greater degree, but I think these people have to be taught first how to teach new approaches and these new subjects.

FW The point about these new examinations is they are set up in response to demand from teachers, from people who are actually doing the work. There is quite a demand for the examinations so the people must be there to teach to them.

Professor D E Ager

I think this question of the supply of trained staff is fundamental, isn't it? We have to know whether there are retraining possibilities within the system to enable teachers to adapt themselves to new ideas. In response to the second comment there are universities which are looking at different sorts of language needs from those which were common 25 or 30 years ago. I think most universities these days, in any case, are looking very hard at what they're doing when they're training language graduates. No university in the country - well perhaps one or two - ignores the training of language competence in the initial training of language graduates. I accept that some don't put enough stress on this and your experience may be different from mine, but graduates today should be competent in the language skills.

Mr G L Lardner, Principal of Rowley Regis Sixth Form College in the Black Country

I am not a linguist but I would like to point out that it has been a most stimulating day for me. I would like to follow up the last point which was made whether we could move away from the academic and more to the real use of language. In my college we offer as an alternative to 'A' levels the Institute of Linguists examinations, which I am assured in language terms are at least as demanding as 'A' levels. Now in spite of what has just been said, we do have to search the country to find a university, or shall we say a few universities who will consider for their first degree courses in modern languages someone who is offering Institute of Linguists part 2 instead of 'A' level, even when the candidate is also offering English literature with a prognosis of a high grade, and it does seem to be really consistant with what we've just heard about

the changing attitudes of universities towards language in their first degree courses.

Professor N Reeves - University of Surrey

At Surrey, we would certainly accept someone with an Institute of Linguists grade 2. I am not sure that Aston University would do likewise. I think on the whole that although Dennis is quite right - attitudes towards languages are changing in the traditional departments - nonetheless it is still safer for applicants with this qualification to apply to the technological universities because attitudes changed there longer ago than they are changing in the traditional departments.

Professor D E Ager - University of Aston

If anyone feels strongly about the matter and would like to convey their feelings perhaps they would care to write to the Association of University Professors of French or to the Conference of University Teachers of German, to the Associations of University Linguists or direct to University language departments. University departments are not necessarily aware of the feeling in schools on these matters, and it would be very helpful to have these views communicated.

Mr M B Harrison - Head of Menzies High School in Sandwell

Can I take up the points being made about the resources of teachers. This is one of the things which has become apparent in our area of the country - the lack of teachers of languages. It is almost impossible to ensure that there is a big enough supply, so I wonder how we break in to this cycle of deprivation. There are a number of my colleagues, Heads within my area who have had to rewrite their timetables this year, and look like having to do the same next year because there is no teacher available, and it is not just the French teacher, there is just no language teacher available, very often. Now where do we break into this? Somebody mentioned retraining a moment ago in another context. Isn't there anything that could be done to improve the supply at a very basic level?

PD I would just like to add to the previous point, that if we produce more and more graduates, with this superb linguistic competence, they are going to be so competent that they won't bother to come into teaching, because they will earn more money working and selling products in commerce than they would teaching French in school. I think this is one of the difficulties that is built in with the whole problem of teacher supply in shortage subjects like Physics, Maths and Modern Languages. The Government are looking at pay schemes for teachers of various subjects; at methods of allowing Heads to appoint teachers on higher scales if they teach shortage subjects. At the moment the only prospect of improvement that I can see is the differential pay scheme for Modern Languages and shortage subjects.

NR I don't think this problem is confined to the Black Country; it certainly affects Hampshire. One can't imagine somewhere quite so different. We know that there is a serious shortage of language teachers in that county also and I know of schools that have had to curtail their language teaching programmes because they have not had anyone to teach them. I would also like to say that our own graduates at Surrey, who are reasonably competent in fact don't become teachers, I can hardly think of one recently. The percentage of our graduates who become school teachers must be absolutely minute. Those who do, teach English as a foreign language and leave for the Fatherland.

Mr J Bell - Language Teacher from Leicester

I am in fact here as a delegate of my union - The Professional Association of Teachers; I mention that because I was interested in Mr Downes' comments, among others, that we should talk to the unions about their thoughts on examinations. It's noticeable just at the moment that unions are very much in the news but they're not in fact saying a great deal about education. I moved from a very large union to a small union which is struggling to find its voice and representation, and it is exactly what we have in mind, to give our thoughts on examinations and things like job specifications, for instance what exactly does the Head of Languages do? what does the Deputy Head do? and so on, and also national criteria for courses, and I do think we could be lending our minds to those things.

Keith Emmans, Senior Lecturer, Language Teaching Centre, University of York
Co-author of the Nuffield sponsored report on Languages in Commerce and Industry.

May I welcome the BOTB report; I believe it's obviously intended to try and make industry aware of their needs for languages. When I attended the RSA meeting a mixed bag of feeling came up but it seems to me that the problem of the concept of 'need' is at the basis of this. As Peter Downes very rightly said, we are not in the business of just producing people to make good and to be in the right skills because even if we could do that in our current climate of technological change we'd get it all wrong anyway. But I feel very strongly that if we could get a national awareness both in industry - and if only our politicians would admit to speaking foreign languages; some of them actually do, but make sure they don't let anybody know about it - we'd have an attitude which I think would make the learners in school want to go on and do it. I only hope that in the future all this investment in language teaching will eventually turn out parents who will then produce children in about 30 years' time who'll believe it's the normal thing to do; it's a long-term process. But on the other hand I think we've been talking to some extent about the mesh between what education produces and what industry would like to employ. If my reading of it is right, we can't talk about the universities, we talk about the universities before the 1960's and the new universities: the Astons, the Baths, the Surreys, the Herriot-Watts, the Salfords, the Bradfords. And they will all tell you that they have not a great deal of difficulty in placing their students in jobs afterwards. As Professor Reeves says they go off afterwards to help boost the German economy because the British economy doesn't know how to use them and they 're typically selling English. I would like to make one point about the extent to which modern languages graduates of the traditional variety can or cannot end up using their languages. I think it may not be possible to turn a modern languages graduate into a naval architect in five minutes, but it certainly is possible to turn a modern languages graduate into an effective accountant - unfortunately again of course to export them. In Paris I met a graduate of a conventional language course from the University of Reading who'd gone off to read accountants and who was working for an accountancy house in Paris. It can be done in certain areas, and there are a lot of jobs in the area of accountancy which need foreign language skills. But now comes the question, I wonder if it is possible to define needs.

Can the BOTB be more specific in what they want? Anecdotal evidence is not enough. Can you give us any sort of fact and figures? Are you only interested in the high flying graduates who are going to be the captains of industry or the leaders of the export field? Is there a need for people lower down - we know it is going to be an intermittent need, we have found that out already - but can you give us some more facts and figures? We do know of course, that only a minority of people actually earn their crust of bread using languages at all. We know that. We also know of course that a large number of people thoroughly enjoy their 'A' level courses but that some of the value got out of them will probably be in their leisure activities. But if you want to have the persons with the languages that you want, at the time that you want it, could you give us some indication of where that need is.

AF Perhaps I ought to try and answer that. Not that I am anything to do with the BOTB except for having served on its Working Party. The BOTB Working Party report, which you have read, was the result of a lot of research amongst the members of the group. Each of us was required to go and see universities and Chambers of Commerce and users and employers of linguists. There is also another report which you may have seen: the BETRO report, which was commissioned recently and contains quite a lot of information.

I contend myself that both reports suggest that there is a need for a lot of language knowledge amongst a whole range in industry, and I think we would be very pleased indeed to see languages much more widely spread. Having said that, I hope you will be proud of a fact which I can tell you. And that is that the British Engineering Employers' Federation belongs to an all-Europe association of similar groupings. It is, of course, true that all the others speak English, but the British delegation is quite comfortable in French and German and a bit of Italian as well, so we don't compare all that badly.

Mr H F Mellon - Headmaster of the Cardinal Newman School, Coventry

Along with several of the others who have spoken, I too have very much enjoyed the contributions especially those after a very pleasant lunch when one would normally expect to doze. But I admit to disappointment in today: that I came hoping to meet people from industry as well as from the educational profession. I don't know how many others came for that purpose but I have several things which I wanted to chat over with industrialists and people who are responisble for buying the products that I produce in my school, namely the kids. And I am sad that so few have come to this very important meeting. I was very impressed with the things Mr Downes was saying about the ways in which industry can in fact encourage and support the schools in the matter of modern language teaching. It is quite within the competence of industry for example in its recruitment of apprentices. We have a situation in the engineering field as well as in many others where you have ten and twenty, thirty applications for every apprenticeship which you offer. You say you want four, five 'O' levels, you specify Physics and you specify Maths, you say you must have 'O' level English; but you ought to let it be known that an 'O' level foreign language or a CSE 1 foreign language would be an added plus. The number of boys going on to do languages in the 4th and 5th years would double and triple and quadruple.

I am quite sure that the present dominance of girls learning languages in our 4th, 5th and in our 6th form groups would be counterbalanced by a surge of quite intelligent young men coming forward to do something that they believe would help them get a job. That is the first point. The second point that I want to make is that I think that the fact the captains of industry can make competent and happy relations with their colleagues from the Federation Internationale and other European bodies is not the real problem that we face. The Germans learn English, the Italians learn English, the Russians learn English to come and sell in England and it is perfect sales sense to expect us to learn German and Italian and Russian if we are going to sell in Germany, Italy and Russia. And it's practical and serious Russian and German as well as social Russian and German that they want. I would think myself that industries - rather than indulge in these crash courses - should send young executive material into France and into Germany to work for six months, for twelve months at the firm's expense, three, five or ten years before you need that expertise on a selling mission. You ought to have an awareness and a depth to your language preparation that I find sadly lacking in my contacts with industry. I spent two weeks living in a Dutch household two years ago. There was a 14 year old boy in the household; there was a 12 year old English girl; there was a 14 year old German boy. The 14 year old Dutch boy talked Dutch to his parents quite happily; talked English to me quite happily. When I asked his father how the lad was so competent he said "who can be bothered learning Dutch?" The motivation was there. The father said 70% of the boy's listening and viewing time on radio and television was in pop music which comes over in German and English. I would urge that we take up Mr Downes' suggestion that we do everything in our power to bring home the point to the Broadcasting Authorities: BBC2 and BBC1 and ITV ought to give a firm language contribution not at a time when staff can view them but at a time when 11 and 12 year old childern can view them. I think myself it's familiarity with the language that makes a competent practical linguist such as that Dutch boy.

AF Thank you. Would Professor Ager like to comment on the audience that were invited today. I think industrialists were not really included.

DEA They were not indeed. This is a conference for headteachers to look at the implications of the BOTB report. It was not meant to be a conference of dialogue between industrialists in the one side and educational services on the other. I think such a conference is yet to take place. What we were trying to look at today were some of the implications for schools in terms of possible re-organisation; of pressure upon the BBC; of looking at the examination system in the country at large - before such a dialogue really can be engaged sensibly. And I feel that there isn't really much point for example, in "us" attacking the "industrialists", or in "them" attacking "us". We are in a situation in which we have to work together, and we're looking for ways in which the BOTB report and the other reports which have been published in the last three to four years can be implemented; ways in which they can be made practical, offer something which is practicable; and I would hope that that is the first stage in an ongoing dialogue.

AF Thank you very much.

Mr J P Sudworth, Wigan Education Authority

Might I continue the point made by the last speaker - I will in fact go further - I don't think languages, in fact, start equally from other subjects. Employers simply ask for four subjects: English and Maths and two others. They miss out the fact that languages, in comparability studies, show up as being more difficult than other

subjects at '0' level. And therefore someone who requires four subjects at '0' level - he has a chance he may scrape a pass at '0' level in French, and if he can do that he can ensure a confident pass in History, simply by working ..... So in fact someone who opts to do a language but who doesn't have to do it for his future requirment is putting himself at a disadvantage. I asked our local careers offices how many firms specify languages for 16+ leavers. And the answer is none. This is the information they've passed back to the schools, the schools pass on to the pupils, and the pupils then say, "Well, unless I've got a good chance of getting an '0' level then there's no point in me taking it." And to tie it up with the comments about the Dutch, if you take the CSE equivalent in Holland you must take the course in four subjects: there are two compulsory subjects - Dutch and a foreign language. Maths isn't compulsory because they say Maths isn't what you need for business, just primary school arithmetic. Geometry and trigonometry is not necessary, but for them a language is far more important. If you've got arithmetic for three years at secondary school you're perfectly competent. They have a completely different attitude towards language qualification - for them it's part of the core, and we've gone back from it; you used to have to have a language qualification to go to university and because our scientists couldn't do it we've taken that away. It's no longer important. In the '77 green paper there was mention of a core certificate which would be more important than one in single subjects. English, Science, Maths and Modern Language tends to be the core curriculum that comes up again and again and which is currently being discussed. If you want pupils to opt for languages you've got to show them that by taking a more difficult subject they are gaining some advantage and not, as at the moment, a disadvantage.

NR Mr Downes and I were yesterday at a meeting of a GCE Board discussing Modern Languages, and Mr Downes put this point that it was more difficult to get a pass in French than say in History. And instinctively I agreed but unfortunately when I looked in the little green book we'd just been given and examined the statistics for passes A-C (percentages, that is judged against the population taking it) the figures for French actually were not distinguishable from those of Maths or History. They were to within a percent of each other.

JPS Can I just say I'm talking about the subject comparisons - you look at the same candidate and see what they got in - say History - and compare with what they achieved in Modern Language. The JMB did this two years consecutively against a general intelligence test as well. They came up with the fact that each year for three years the French was way over the limit of difficulty. In fact it was up to two grades more difficult than some of the others. In other words the same candidates, having worked the same time, were coming out with grades two worse. Now, either all language teachers are poorer teachers than the History teachers or languages are more difficult.

I had a dialogue some time ago with the JMB on this and I did a quick study of a few of our schools, and I noted that something in the order of 10% of the ability range of pupils pass '0' level German. This is in Wigan, the percentage passing '0' level English is over 35%; it's not exactly the haven of English, as you will note from me! This is for an examination, the mean of which is supposed to be 20% - all I'm saying is that the divergence is quite considerable from that mean, and that languages suffer from that.

PD That is a point I've been making time and time again ... the only way to get Boards to believe this is to continue putting pressure on them and to send them the names of our candidates and a list of their results, as I did with a class of my own pupils: if you line up the grades for them they will begin to believe the pattern and the fact that it is difficult to get a good grade in a modern language - the pass rate should not be 60% or 61% it should be somewhere between 75 and 80%, given the fact that we've already pre-selected the candidates who are going in for it. But if you ask the Examining Board about this a typical Chief Examiner will say, "We find about 60% of the candidates get through". How does he find that? Because he has set up the scheme in order to pass 60%'.

AF Time is getting on. I think perhaps we've exhausted this particular subject. Is there anybody who would like to make a point on a different note before we end?

Mr N Holden - Correspondent for Export Times and Director of Worldwide Languages, London

.... If you were to take a survey of exporting companies and ask them what the most difficult market is with which they have trouble, I think that time and time again France comes up top of the list. Why, for all the millions of hours devoted to the teaching of French, at all levels of education, should this be the case? Something must have dropped off somewhere; I don't advocate that language training should be a preparation for a business career, but I just would like someone to answer my question.

AF France is a difficult market - quite apart from language ability - for a whole number of other reasons: reasons of non-tariff barriers, culture, prejudice etc.

NH The point I'm trying to make is that surely we should be training people who learn about French culture, or teaching about the French as they are; something about their attitudes and beliefs.

AF I think it's dangerous to do that, I think you should discover and learn for yourself.

Mr P Toogood, Headmaster, Madeley Court Comprehensive School, Telford

Since 1972 I've been occupied with a few teachers in schools where I've been working in organising young workers' exchanges. The British Council has generously backed these exchanges from time to time, both for young people and young workers who've left an 11-16 school or who are not going on to 6th form. I've noticed that the young French people and the young Germans and Algerians who have been coming over in exchange with our groups have been allowed, in their conditions of employment ten days' study leave to be taken either for study or travel, and that this is paid leave and is allowed to them by law in their contracts. Although local factories were extremely helpful, and joined in and gave us an apprentice or someone and said OK he can go with full pay, this isn't actually built into the young workers' conditions in England. I wondered whether some pressure could be put somewhere to try to achieve this for the young workers. I think this would make a difference at a particular level which would make a significant contribution to service engineers and so on.

AF I'm very glad that you've drawn attention to younger people and service engineers and similar people because I was becoming afraid that everybody was thinking that we were only talking about the need for languages at the highest level. That is far from true. The answer to your question really lies in the difficulty of making British management understand the need for languages. This kind of conference, and the kind of work that is being done by various universities and other academic bodies, e.g. the BOTB and the RSA, is the best way forward - it's a slow business and it takes a lot of time. Remember earlier on I said, "What you've never had you don't miss", and you don't think other people need either. That is the problem we face.

Summary - Mr A Frodsham

Ladies and gentlemen, I think it is time for me to try to sum up what has been a very interesting day. May I start by thanking you all for the very good contributions which you have made, and for the provocative thoughts that many of you have put forward. To take up an expression that somebody bandied around the room at one stage, please don't think of me as an enthusiastic reformer. I have no brief nor qualifications to reform the educational system. All I can do is to perceive on the one hand, the shortages we have in industry and on the other, to try and indicate to you, who are in the end the people who are going to make good those shortages, the sort of things that we are looking for.

There is considerable resistance to change, and this is a human trait which affects all of us. It is perhaps a particular trait of this country. There is resistance to change in the fact that employers don't admit that languages are any more necessary today than they were thirty years ago. Indeed, if everybody speaks English why should we bother to learn their languages, which are foreign anyway?

There is also resistance from the academic world. We heard about all the resistance to changing examinations; we have heard about the resistance to change to syllabi; but we did hear about the very interesting example of a large London comprehensive, near the Elephant and Castle, where an entirely new system is being developed.

We've had some great orators this afternoon - as well as our two main rebels, Mr Moys on examinations and Mr Cross on methods, even Peter Downes had plenty of criticisms of all of us. We should listen very carefully to what Mr Downes said, but I don't think we should wear a hair shirt as a result. Certainly a lot of things have gone wrong and we've had disappointments, but the time has come for us to recognise that and to try and overcome the human resistance to change from which we all suffer. I do accept that the schools are not there to rear young foals to become the workhorses for industry. Of course schools have a very much wider responsibility than that. The ones that were listed by Mr Downes were absolutely right, and nobody would deny that.

Nonetheless, industry and working life are a very big part of what our children are going to have to do. Most people are at work for 25% of their lives, and the education they receive at your hands must help and equip them to do their jobs well, to satisfy them to lead them to good rewards, and to keep them interested in the sort of work that they can do well. You have to direct them into the avenues in which they can do well, and help them on their way forward.

On the question of resources, there was mention of time in the schedules; of money which comes from the taxpayer; and of the shortage of teachers.

One curious thing about this country is that we are short of almost every kind of skill: we're short of engineers, of electronics engineers, of good marketing people, of top management, indeed we're short of everyone. And on top of that we're short of teachers!

One of the very important points, which came up over and over again, was the need to develop the capacity amongst the young to learn languages later in life. This was very well put by a number of teachers. Whether we do this by the teaching of linguistics, or by the better and more comprehensive teaching of English grammar, or other means at school, we do need to give young people a foundation upon which in after life they can build language proficiency.

On the question of broadcasting, I thought there was one very simple and easy thing that could be done immediately, with practically no difficulty, that might help a large number of people. Whenever you see an overseas personality speaking, especially from the Continent, the original language is always suppressed, and the commentator tells you what is being said. I've just come back from a trip to Japan, and they don't do that at all there: the original English (or other tongue) comes through, but it is sub-titled, thus providing an excellent opportunity to keep your language really up to date and not miss what is being said. I would have thought that was an easy, simple way without disturbing any time-tables or stressing non-linguists.

Travel is grossly exaggerated as a way of perfecting a language unless it is organised far more sensibly than it is done now. With great respect, I don't think there's any advantage in schoolmasters from England taking a group of thirty people off to France, because I don't think they'll learn any more French than if they stayed behind. They might get a bit of the atmosphere, but they won't learn the language. (Some audience reaction).

Sponsorship abroad in the engineering industry might take a slightly different form. We ought to try to place undergraduates during their period at university in for example, a French factory or a German factory, but on their own, and they thus become obliged to take part in local life. I also take the point that an 'O' level in languages should be an added plus to apprentice recruitment, and I will do my best to see that this point is put across to employers.

You heard from our host that this conference had a specific purpose; which was to bring together headmasters and heads of foreign languages in the schools, but I think that this needs to be followed up by joint conferences with employers. I also think it is important to try and get numbers equally balanced. We don't want to go through the RSA example again where a supposedly joint conference, at least as big as this had only six or seven industrialists present with all the rest from the teaching profession. If you are able to mount further conferences of this kind I think it is important to try and achieve an appropriate balance.

Finally, may I thank all my platform colleagues and speakers who have contributed so well today. We have certainly been very fortunate in having people who express themselves very well. On the whole there have been a fair number of provocative ideas, which is a good thing. I 'd specially like to thank the University of Aston, and Professor Ager for so kindly being our host today and arranging everything for us. I hope that we shall all meet again at further conferences.

REPORTS FROM LUNCH-TIME DISCUSSION GROUPS

The seating arrangements at lunch time were so arranged as to allow an exchange of views among people from different sectors of the education service and other fields of work. A member of each table was requested to note the topics discussed and send in a brief report. Below is a summary in note form of the comments received.

Education and Schools

- Shortage of specialist teachers
- Need for in-service training to enable teachers to use new methods and resources more competently, and be encouraged to be more adventurous in their language teaching. To this end ways should be found to permit more teachers to attend courses - money, time off, replacement staff.
- Language teaching with a heavy oral element is much more taxing and so many teachers find it necessary (because of class size, discipline, time-table etc) to follow a more traditional syllabus.
- Teachers and lecturers could make greater efforts to develop their students' awareness of the value of learning languages
- Modern language teachers should remember that the objective of schooling young people towards 'O' level, 'A' level (and ultimately to a university modern language course) can distort the methods they employ and cause them to forget that the actual objective of language learning is to develop communicative skills.
- The need in some schools for resources; manpower, hardware, software etc. to enable effective teaching to be carried out.
- 6th Form specialisation makes it more difficult to combine language and technical/scientific studies at school level and therefore subsequently too. (Rejection of N & F proposals regretted.)
- The problems of preparing 'A' level candidates with the emphasis on literary studies alongside those wishing to continue the study of the language as a non-examination subject for AO level.
- It appears desirable to bring back an 'O' level language requirement for university entrants.
- It was felt that the average course for French is too long leading to boredom.
- Who should learn foreign languages in schools? When resources are limited should <u>all</u> children study a foreign language? It was regretted that the wider the ability range of the class the more the language content of the course was 'watered down'.
- Which foreign languages should be taught and to what level?
- The need to investigate the differences in aptitude for languages between boys and girls.
- Ways should be found so that <u>all</u> pupils can go abroad.

Industry

- Industry needs to prove that it believes in the value of an ability to speak foreign languages. Employers should be prepared to pay more for personnel with a knowledge of languages.
- Staff who speak other languages should be encouraged by industry. Companies should demonstrate their regard for language skills by giving linguists higher status. A greater emphasis on linguistic ability when advertising for staff would help in this direction.
- Private enterprises should develop a more informed approach to language training. All staff, regardless of their positions should be encouraged

to attend language courses. At the same time those who are most likely to employ languages in business situations i.e. executives, service engineers etc. should be keenly encouraged to learn new languages or to develop existing skills.

- There are many problems in teaching languages to businessmen on intensive courses.
- Frequently industry seems to underestimate the difficulty of acquiring competence in a language.
- The possibility of industrialists conducting some interviews of prospective employees in a language other than English.
- The difficulty of finding technologists with language skills may not be unconnected with the lower status often accorded to applied science and with the tendency for talented all-rounders to be guided/attracted to pure science.

Public Opinion

- The long-term objective should be to change society's attitude to the development of linguistic skills.
- Parents need to be motivated towards the value of language learning for their children.
- People are not generally aware that industry values a joint training in language and technology.
- Television and radio stations could assist by broadcasting more foreign language material at peak times or at times when it is known that the listening audience will include high numbers of those likely to benefit from familiarisation with foreign languages.
- Some aspects of public support for education militate against languages - for example mandatory grants are not available for bilingual secretarial training.

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